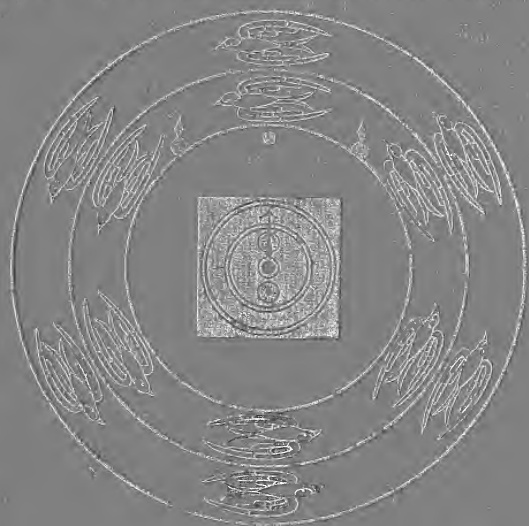


THE ROUND OF THE CLOCK

STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR



W. ROBERTSON NICOLL



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THE ROUND OF THE CLOCK



THE ROUND OF THE CLOCK

“THE STORY OF OUR LIVES
FROM YEAR TO YEAR”

BY
W. ROBERTSON NICOLL
(William Robertson)

ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE MORROW

At the revolution of every five years we find ourselves another, and yet the same—there is a change of views, and no less of the light in which we regard them ; a change of motives as well as of actions.—THE ABBOT.

HODDER AND STOUGHTON
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TO
MY FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE
J. E. HODDER WILLIAMS

5835



P R E F A C E

THIS little volume was commenced and carried through under the influence of Oliver Wendell Holmes. Perhaps no one has written more wisely and copiously about the milestones of life than he. Alike in his prose and poetry, it is almost the dominant subject. In "The New Portfolio" he writes : " I have just lost my dear and honoured contemporary of the last century. A hundred years ago this day, December 13, 1784, died the admirable and ever-to-be-remembered Dr. Samuel Johnson. The year 1709 was made ponderous and illustrious in English biography by his birth. My own humble advent to the world of protoplasm was in the year 1809 of the present century. Summer was just ending when those four letters, 'son b.,' were written under the date of my birth, August 29. Autumn had just begun when my great pre-contemporary entered this un-Christian universe, and was made a member of the Christian Church on the same day, for he was born and baptized on September 18.

“Thus there was established a close bond of relationship between the great English scholar and writer and myself. Year by year, and almost month by month, my life has kept pace in this century with his life in the last century. I had only to open my ‘Boswell’ at any time, and I knew just what Johnson at my age, twenty or fifty or seventy, was thinking and doing; what were his feelings about life; what changes the years had wrought in his body, his mind, his feelings, his companionships, his reputation. It was for me a kind of unison between two instruments, both playing that old familiar air, ‘Life’; one a bassoon, if you will, and the other an oaten pipe, if you care to find an image for it, but still keeping pace with each other, until the players both grew old and grey. At last the thinner thread of sound is heard by itself, and its deep accompaniment rolls out its thunder no more. I feel lonely now that my great companion and friend of so many years has left me.”

Another passage may be quoted out of many: “Nothing strikes one more, in the race of life, than to see how many give out in the first half of the course. ‘Commencement Day’ always reminds me of the start of the ‘Derby,’ when the beautiful high-bred three-year-olds of the season are brought up for trial. That day is

the start, and life is the race. Here we are at Cambridge, and a class is just 'graduating.' Poor Harry ! he was to have been there too, but he has paid forfeit. Step out here into the grass back of the church ; ah ! there it is :

“‘Hunc lapidem posuerunt
Socii Moerentes.’

“ *Ten years gone.* First turn in the race. A few broken down ; two or three bolted. Several show in advance of the ruck. *Cassock*, a black colt, seems to be ahead of the rest. Those black colts commonly get the start, I have noticed, of the others in the first quarter. *Meteor* has pulled up.

“ *Twenty years.* Second corner turned. *Cassock* has dropped from the front, and *Judex*, an iron-grey, has the lead. But look ! how they have thinned out ! Down flat—five—six—how many ? They lie still enough ! they will get up again in this race, be very sure ! And the rest of them, what a ‘tailing off’ ! Anybody can see who is going to win—perhaps.

“ *Thirty years.* Third corner turned. *Dives*, bright sorrel, ridden by the fellow in a yellow jacket, begins to make play fast ; is getting to be the favourite with many. But who is that

other one that has been lengthening his stride from the first, and now shows close up to the front? Don't you remember the quiet brown colt *Asteroid*, with the star in his forehead? That is he; he is one of the sort that lasts. Look out for him! The black 'colt,' as we used to call him, is in the background, taking it easily in a gentle trot. There is one they used to call the *Filly*, on account of a certain feminine air he had; well up, you see. The *Filly* is not to be despised, my boy!

"*Forty years.* More dropping off, but places much as before.

"*Fifty years.* Race over. All that are on the course are coming in at a walk; no more running. Who is ahead? Ahead? What! and the winning-post a slab of white or grey stone standing out from that turf where there is no more jockeying or straining for victory! Well, the world marks their places in its betting-book; but be sure that these matter very little, if they have run as well as they knew how!"

There are, I think, not a few who like to know on their birthdays how others were faring at the same age, and for these this book has been published. I have collected the facts at intervals for a considerable period. Though I

have had the help of kind friends, yet I have mainly depended on my own reading, and I am painfully aware of the inadequacy of this compilation. Such as it is, it has cost me much labour. Perhaps it may give pleasure to some, and it may even be taken as a basis for some more thorough and scientific work in the future.

If I am not mistaken, psychologists are studying more earnestly the stages of life, and it is quite possible they may arrive at results valuable alike for teaching and for the conduct of life. Professor William James is particularly suggestive on these points. But on this subject I am allowed to quote from a letter by my friend Professor John Adams, of the University of London, who writes with authority. He says :

“Hitherto the tendency among psychologists has been to ignore the question of age. It has been assumed that their subject is the fully developed mind, and they have treated of ‘the soul’ much as a naturalist might treat of ‘the lion.’ The older point of view was static, the new is dynamic. With the development of genetic psychology, age naturally came to be a matter of importance; but even here it is treated as of serious consequence only at the earlier stages. It is in Child Study that we have types classified by

ages. When the adolescent period is passed, it seems to be assumed that age ceases to cause serious variation, and that henceforth 'the way lies long, straight and dusty to the grave.'

"The newer psychology, with its bias towards experiment and quantitative thinking, tends naturally to give to the age element its due importance in the study of the development of mind and character. But as yet little has been done in the way of recording and classifying facts that depend upon considerations of the age of the persons studied. There seems every prospect that valuable results will be obtained by a scientific analysis of the facts of biography, corrected, wherever possible, by direct observation and experiment."

My old friend and fellow-student, Mr. Duff Macdonald, in his remarkable book "Africana" tells us that when he was expounding the Sermon on the Mount to a savage tribe he was advised to omit "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," and "Take no thought for the morrow," "because, as a matter of fact, the negro never thinks of to-morrow at all." It has also been said more broadly that the Arabians take no account of time, and cannot tell how old they are. On this subject Professor Margoliouth, of

Oxford, has most kindly favoured me with the following memoranda :

“ SAVAGES AND TIME

“ 1. The savage's inability to take count of time is connected with his inability to count; L. L. Conant (*'The Number Concept,'* 1896) states that with some races of Bolivia there was no number sense at all. No Australian language contains a word for four; the natives can rarely count beyond two. I have read somewhere that in African languages for numbers beyond five foreign words have regularly to be used. This must be modified: in Nubian their resources fail when they come to thirty; in another at hundred. There is a story told of a Bedouin, shortly after the Prophet's time, who asked one thousand drachms (francs) for a jewel, but would have asked more had he known that there was any number higher than a thousand.

“ 2. G. F. Abbott, *'Macedonian Folklore,'* p. 277 (quoted by H. Hubert, *'Étude Sommaire de la représentation du Temps,'* 1905), gives an example of a calculation made by a story-teller: 'A man took three years to go down to the Antipodes, where he made no stay; it took him twelve years to come back: in all thirty years.'

“ 3. My brother-in-law, who lived for some time

in Damascus, used to assert that, if you asked a Bedouin his age, he would reckon up the ages of his camel, horse, donkey, etc. (if he had such animals), and give the sum-total as his own age. The only experience of the sort of my own which I can remember is once asking a sheikh in Cairo whether any one there was known to be a centenarian ; the sheikh pointed to a number of persons whom he declared to be centenarians, and assured me that they were common. In the main, however, I doubt whether such cases are more common among the Arabs of the larger communities than that of Phil Squod in 'Bleak House,' who knew that his age had an eight in it ; while the brickmaker in the same book, who is detected as possessing Lady Dedlock's watch because he reckons time by twenty minutes (whereas he would otherwise have been satisfied with hours as the unit), takes us back to the savage.

" 4. The statements of Arabic authors, who make no difficulty about a man living three hundred years, are probably due to want of critical ability. A very early Islamic work, 'The Long-Lived,' by Abu Hatim Sijistani (died A.D. 849), contains a catalogue of such persons. The great geographer and biographer Yakut (of the thirteenth century A.D.) copies one of these biographies in his 'Dictionary of Learned Men': 'Ubaidallah, son of

Sariyyah, lived three hundred years, but some say only two hundred and twenty.' It seems to me that Islam, with its own sacred calendar, must have made a vast difference to Arabia in this matter; and, indeed, pre-Islamic history teems with absurdities of the sort mentioned, and has wholly inconsistent dates; but in Islamic times complete ignorance of chronology seems to me confined to the extremely ignorant or inhabitants of remote regions. I cannot find that those keen observers Burckhardt, Palgrave, and Doughty allude to it."

It seems certain that in the future the years, the days, and even the hours of mortal life will be reckoned with ever-increasing solicitude. The main part of this volume deals with the experiences of men endowed more liberally than their fellows. It has been held that our literature in general often misleads commonplace folks from the fact that its most influential portions are due to men of genius, and that men of genius, in their interpretations of life, are very apt to misinterpret the experiences of those who have no genius at all. Still, when we track the steps of most brilliant and fortunate careers, we find the same joys and the same trials as befall the obscure who draw in this atmosphere "so sweet to breathe, so sure to kill in a few score of years at farthest." It need hardly be said that

the characterisations given to the lustrums of life are in no way hard and fast. Those who live long enough will probably pass through them all, but they will come earlier or later. There can be no attempt at rigidity or precision.

For the division of life into lustrums I am able to quote high authority. Sir Walter Scott has written in "The Abbot": "At the revolution of every five years we find ourselves another, and yet the same—there is a change of views, and no less of the light in which we regard them; a change of motives as well as of actions."

My warmest thanks are due to the friends and correspondents who have helped me with suggestions and corrections. In particular I am deeply obliged to the eminent men in the Insurance world, who have most generously supplied me with the materials for Chapters II and XX. Among these are Mr. George Richmond, of the Scottish Widows Fund Life Assurance Society; Mr. P. Chalmers, Manager for Scotland of the Sceptre Life Association, Ltd.; and Mr. S. G. Warner, F.I.A., Vice-President of the Institute of Actuaries, Actuary to the Law Union and Rock Insurance Co.

To my colleague Miss Jane Stoddart, to Professor John Adams, and to the Rev. T. H. Darlow, of

the British and Foreign Bible Society, I owe very much for the sustained interest they have taken in the preparation of this book, for the assistance they have given, and for the many valuable suggestions with which they have enriched it.

A SHAKESPEAREAN CALENDAR.

- | | | |
|--|---|------------------------------|
| "What hour now?" | } | Hamlet, Act I. |
| "I think it lacks of twelve" | | |
| "The clock has stricken twelve" | . | Comedy of Errors. |
| "And now the clock strikes one" | . | Comedy of Errors. |
| "I think it be two o'clock; The bell hath rung" | } | Romeo and Juliet. |
| "Two? why, then, 'tis time" | | |
| "Two? why, then, 'tis time" | | Macbeth. |
| "About three of the clock" | . | { Henry IV., Second Part. |
| "Can'st awake by four o' the clock?" | | |
| "To-morrow, four o'clock" | . | Measure for Measure. |
| "'Tis almost five o'clock, cousin" | . | { Much Ado About Nothing. |
| "At six o'clock in the morning" | . | |
| "I think 'tis now some seven o'clock" | | Taming of the Shrew. |
| "To-morrow at eight o'clock" | . | { Merry Wives of Windsor. |
| "About the hour of eight" | . | |
| "'Tis nine o'clock" | . | Merchant of Venice. |
| "It hath struck ten o'clock" | . | { Merry Wives of Windsor. |
| "Eleven o'clock the hour" | . | |
| "The Windsor bell hath struck twelve." | } | Merry Wives of Windsor. |

SHAKESPEARE FOR EACH HOUR

- "The bell then beating ONE" . . . Hamlet, Act I.
- "Sure, Luciana, it is TWO o'clock" Comedy of Errors, II.
- "The clock hath stricken THREE" . . . Julius Cæsar, II.
- "RICHMOND: 'How far into the
morning is it, lords?'" } Richard III., V.
- "LORDS: 'Upon the stroke of FOUR'" }
- "At FIVE o'clock
I shall receive the money for the
same" } Comedy of Errors, IV.
- "ARIEL: On the SIXTH hour, at
which time, my lord,
You said our work should cease" } The Tempest, V.
- "Let's see, I think 'tis now SEVEN
o'clock" } Taming of the Shrew,
IV.
- "The EIGHTH hour,
Be that the uttermost?" } Julius Cæsar, II.
- "It's supper-time, my lord;
It's NINE o'clock" } Richard III., V.
- "PAROLLES: TEN o'clock; within
these three hours
'Twill be time enough to go home" } All's Well that Ends
Well.
- "FORD: ELEVEN o'clock the hour" { Merry Wives of
Windsor, IV.
- "HAMLET: 'What hour now?'" }
- "HORATIO: 'I think it lacks of
TWELVE'" } Hamlet, I.

"I have made a sketch of a golden twelve-rayed sun with the clock in the centre. The rays correspond to the hours, and in each of the golden points a word is painted in Gothic letters. Here they are as they stand in succession: I, we begin; II, we want; III, we learn; IIII, we obey; V, we love; VI, we hope; VII, we search; VIII, we suffer; IX, we wait; X, we forgive; XI, we resign; XII, we end. The advancing handle marks the hour and its word, and there is many a one we should like to pass quickly by, so as to tarry longer at others; but we must accept all the hours, the good and the bad ones, as they follow each other on life's inexorable great clock."

—"The Letters which Never Reached Him," p. 206.

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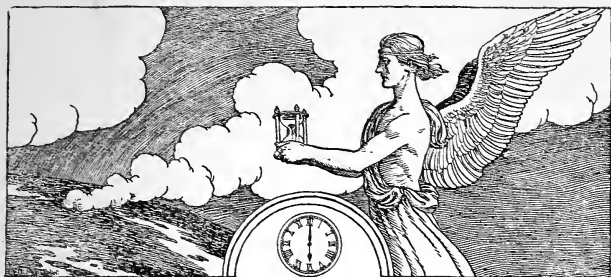
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THE CLOCK

IN a letter addressed by John Ruskin to his father from Lisieux, August 24, 1848, I find the words : “ If one were to calculate averageable life at eighty years, with a doubtful evening after that time, and suppose this represented by a day of sixteen hours from six morning till ten night, I am now at *noon*, you at *six* in the evening—with both of us the day is far spent—I never think my day worth much after twelve o’clock.” At this time Ruskin was thirty and his father sixty.

I

This is the text of the present series of papers. I propose to take the story of our lives from year to year as indicated on the clock. I begin at six o’clock in the morning and take every hour

marked by the hour-hand as five years. Each year would thus correspond with a minute marked by the minute-hand. In this way life is divided into lustrums or periods of five years. I propose to indicate the character of each lustrum, and to give from biography and other sources characteristics of each year. So far I follow Ruskin, but I shall extend the length of the day. Ten o'clock at night is a very respectable hour for bedtime, but those who sit up so long may well sit up a little longer. If they sit up till midnight they will be ninety ; if they sit up till very late they may go on to a hundred, and perhaps it is possible even to go twice round the clock and remain alive till a hundred and twenty. We shall see.

There is nothing new in the likening of the course of life to the travelling of the hand on the clock's face. It was rather a favourite idea with Samuel Pepys. He wrote to Evelyn in 1700 : "Please remember what o'clock it is with you and me." It is very wise for one sometimes to call up this thought. He may summon it in connection with either of his two birthdays, his own birthday or New Year's Day. Charles Lamb says : "Every man hath two birthdays, two days at least in every year which set him upon revolving the lapse of time, as it affects his mortal duration. The one is that which in an especial manner he termeth *his*." The other is New Year's Day. The observance of the first he chiefly connects with children who do

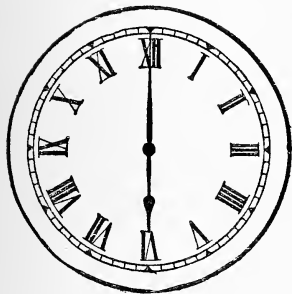
not "understand anything in it beyond cake and orange." Of the second he says: "No one ever regarded it with indifference. It is that from which all date their time, and count upon what is left."

They still show you at Brampton, near Huntingdon, the little garden where Samuel Pepys had his gold buried in 1667. It was feared that the Dutch intended to follow up their victories at the mouth of the Thames and to capture London. Pepys was greatly alarmed, and sent off his father and wife with £1,300 in gold to bury it in the Brampton garden. At the same time he made himself a girdle by which he carried £300 in gold about his body, "that I may not be without something in case I should be surprised." After the scare was over Pepys went down to recover his property, and was put in a great agitation with respect to it. He had other cares. He had to find a husband for his sister, "for she grows old and ugly." But when in the darkness he went out to dig he was almost out of his wits, because it had been "so sillily hid, not half a foot underground, and in the sight of the world from a hundred places." In the end he managed to recover the greater part of it, all in fact but fifty-five pieces. "And so in and to cleanse them: and by this time it was past two in the morning; and so to bed, and there lay in some disquiet all night, telling of the clock till it was daylight." Next morning more pieces were found, and Pepys took

coach to London. "My gold I put into a basket and set under one of the seats; and so my work every quarter of an hour was to look to see whether all was well; and I did ride in great fear all the day." It is not good to be too particular in "telling of the clock," any more than it is good to "ride in great fear all the day." Yet there is such a thing as taking account of the stages in our life, and it is at least interesting,

and may be something more than interesting, to find how other fellow-creatures thought and demeaned themselves at the same point of their journey. There is no such thing as a uniformity of experience. It would be pedantic and worse to map out the road in any rigorous manner. Nor can I pretend to anything approach-

ing completeness. I have had little to depend on except what I remember of my own limited reading.



II

> There is a satisfaction in the face of a good clock. When once you are thoroughly used to it the clock becomes a kind of friend. In Hayward's Correspondence there is an admirable letter from Mrs. Norton. The famous reviewer had been the fast

friend of the lady during her various trials, so she sent him a clock, and with it a letter purporting to be written by the clock itself, and signed "Horloge de Tictic." Here is part of the letter :

"I have heard my donor say that she would give worlds to be able to send you a clock whose works were warranted to make every hour of your life pass pleasantly, in gratitude for many hours of toil and trouble spent by you in that lady's cause. But since such miracles are not, accept *me* as a friend and companion, and I will endeavour to be a cheerful clock. I consider myself, if not equal to a man, at least better than a dog, and therefore a fitter companion. (A dog moraliseth not ; he lieth 'on the rug snoozing ; he requireth food daily. . . . He licketh, indeed, his master's hand, and waggeth his tail, but what of that ? Even the sloth crawleth and eateth leaves.') This is from a great author ; and aptly describes the animal foolishly adopted as 'the friend and favourite of man.' How much nearer to a man's heart should his clock be than his dog ! The clock hath part of his busiest hour ; the dog, not so. The clock, as it were, advises ; nay, almost commands. It points, as much as to say, It is time for that consultation with the Attorney-General ; or, Get you gone to your Courts of Westminster ; or, Call your clerk, and get up that case, or those papers will not be copied in time. Can a dog do so ? No. Stupidly he lieth, and when his master moves, up jumps Bow-wow, with the single

idea that he shall now walk, run, or perchance bathe in the Serpentine! 'Twere as if a clock should always strike 'One,' let what would be the hour! Adieu! Hear me when I advise: that when the circle of Life's great dial is completed, and the ghosts of the Hours accompany the soul into another world, to give an account of its occupations in this, you may recognise none worse employed than those I came to recall; hours kindly, usefully, unselfishly, and I will hope happily spent; hours which are vanished for ever, and have left behind a grateful impression and your old clock."

In an old number of *Blackwood's Magazine*¹ there is a long address "To Our Old House Clock," which recalls not untenderly the manner in which the sweet and bitter happenings of life have been witnessed and summoned and accompanied by the clock, which in the course of the years has become a friend and companion. It begins:

"Old friend! that many a long day through
(Dogdays and all), in brown surtout,
Hath stood ensconced, with wintriest look,
I' th' warmest side o' the chimney nook;
That standeth still i' the self-same place,
With that same cool composèd face—
(Few, by the way, 'mid sentient creatures,
Made up of more expressive features)—
Nor e'er in all that weary while
Hath utter'd plaint of durance vile—
In that stiff garment all of oak,
Thy sentry-box—of heat or smoke;

¹ June 1834.

Of task perpetual—worse than mighty,
Monotonous—of *tædium vitæ*,
Of false reflections on thy truth,
From weary age—impatient youth,
Of Time's deliver'd message, scorned
Or heeded not by those thou'st warned."

Perhaps no writer has allowed his thoughts to linger on the passing of the years as Oliver Wendell Holmes has done. We shall have to quote him on various occasions, but as an introduction the following words from "The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table" may suffice :

"Our brains are seventy-year clocks. The angel of life winds them up once for all, then closes the case, and gives the key into the hand of the angel of the Resurrection.

"Tic-tac ! tic-tac ! go the wheels of thought. Our will cannot stop them ; they cannot stop themselves ; sleep cannot still them ; madness only makes them go faster ; death alone can break into the case, and, seizing the ever-swinging pendulum, which we call the heart, silence at last the clicking of the terrible escapement we have carried so long beneath our wrinkled foreheads."

III

Schiller, in *Wallenstein*, has the line, "Die Uhr schlägt keinem Glücklichen," which Dora Greenwell has somewhat freely translated, "The happy hear no clock." But this is not always true. It is not unpleasing to watch the march of the

hours and years if there is no haunting terror to oppress the heart. Dickens has perfectly rendered the genial aspect of the clock—old, cheerful, companionable, bringing comfort and consolation, linked with the past, beautiful in itself—"a quaint old thing in a huge oaken case curiously and richly carved. What other thing that has not life could cheer me as it does? what other thing that has not life (I will not say how few things that have) could have proved the same patient, true, untiring friend?" George Meredith has told us, in "*Richard Feverel*," how the clock may be watched by a heart intent on bliss. "Lucy stops on the landing where there is an old clock eccentrically correct that night. 'Tis the palpitating pause before the gates of her transfiguration. Mrs. Berry sees her put her rosy finger on the *One* about to strike, and touch all the hours successively till she comes to the *Twelve* that shall sound 'Wife' in her ears on the morrow, moving her lips the while."

One of the great scenes in "*Old Mortality*" describes how Morton was condemned by the Covenanters to die, whereupon Macbriar said: "This is the Sabbath, and our hand shall not be on thee to spill thy blood upon this day; but when the twelfth hour shall strike, it is a token that thy time on earth hath run!" They set Morton amongst them, bound and helpless, in such a manner as to be opposite to the clock which was to strike his knell. Food was placed before him,

for which he had little appetite. Macbriar began praying, but ever and anon dark looks were turned on the dial-plate of the timepiece, to watch its progress towards the moment of execution. Morton's eyes frequently took the same course, with the sad reflection that there appeared no possibility of his life being expanded beyond the narrow segment which the index had yet to travel on the circle until it arrived at the fatal hour." So he waited "till the sword destined to slay him crept out of the scabbard gradually and, as it were, by straw-breadths." Mucklewrath tried to anticipate the fatal moment by putting the index forward, when the sound of deliverance came.

Sometimes it seems as if time would not pass, and there are those who can speak the words :

"I have waited and wept
While the sickening hands of the weary clock
In slow beats tired, or slept."

Never, perhaps, is the clock watched so wearily and so eagerly as when we wait for a message of hope or despair from the sick-room, which may be the death-room. The author of "The Little White Bird" has told the tale quite perfectly :

"A NIGHTPIECE

"One by one the lights of the streets went out, but still a lamp burned steadily in the little window across the way. I know not how it happened, whether I had crossed first to him or

he to me ; but, after being for a long time as the echo of each other's steps, we were together now. . . . There was a clock hard by that struck the quarters, and one o'clock passed and two. What time is it now ? Twenty past two. And now ? It is still twenty past two. . . .

" Well, as you know, the little nursery-governess did not die. At eighteen minutes to four we heard the rustle of David's wings. He boasts about it to this day, and has the hour to a syllable, as if the first thing he ever did was to look at the clock."

Marion Crawford, in " A Roman Singer," writes : " The click of a few more seconds in the clockworks before the hammer smites its angry warning on the bell and leaves echoes of pain writhing through the poor bronze, that is Time. As for Eternity, it is a question of the calculus."

There are those to whom the passing of the hours suggests nothing but a longed-for release. Mark Rutherford, in his best book, " The Deliverance," has told in his incomparable manner an experience, alas ! too frequent :

" There was a clock within a hundred yards of my window which struck the hours and quarters. How I watched that clock ! My spirits rose or fell with each division of the day. From ten to twelve there was nothing but gloom. By half-past twelve I began to discern dinner-time, and the prospect was brighter. After dinner there was

nothing to be done but doggedly to endure until five, and at five I was able to see over the distance from five to seven. . . . It was a comfort to me to think, the moment the clock struck seven, that my second self died, and that my first self suffered nothing by having anything to do with it."

But I mean my clock to be a friendly clock, and to suggest pleasant thoughts of the good that may be found in every part and period of life. Rousseau was afraid of the clock. When he threw up a post that might one day have made him rich because it grew irksome, he sold his watch with the singular and joyful thought that he would never again need to know the time. It is wise to know it, and my clock is meant to be like George Gissing's as he described it in "The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft":

"As the fire purrs and softly crackles, so does my lamp at intervals utter a little gurgling sound when the oil flows to the wick, and custom has made this a pleasure to me. Another sound, blending with both, is the gentle ticking of the clock. I could not endure one of those bustling little clocks, which tick like a fever-pulse, and are only fit for a stockbroker's office; mine hums very slowly, as though it savoured the minutes no less than I do; and when it strikes, the little voice is silver-sweet, telling me, without sadness, that another hour of life is reckoned, another of the priceless hours—

"*Quæ nobis pereunt et imputantur.*"



II

HAS THE LENGTH OF LIFE INCREASED?

I REQUEST my readers, before they proceed to the main part of this chapter, which is necessarily somewhat dry, to make an experiment, or rather two experiments. Let them guess how much the average life has increased during the last thirty or forty or fifty years. Let them then ask their friends to make an estimate. I have done so myself. The lowest estimate I have heard is six years, and the highest twenty. Most fixed the figures at about ten years. What is the truth? Alas! so far as I can discover from the statistics to be quoted, the average increase in the expectation of life at all ages from twenty to seventy, in a vast constituency of assured lives, has been little more than six months. This is the estimate of the

Insurance Record of April 2, 1909, which bases the conclusion on statistics compiled by the Institute of Actuaries in 1902.

Here is undoubtedly a very startling result. Immense advances have been made in science. Sanitation and other preventive measures have been carried out with enormously increased activity. Advance in medical and surgical knowledge and practice has been admittedly very great. Yet it would seem that, with all these things, we have been able to roll back only by an inch the advancing tides of death.

It was necessary for my purpose that this question should be considered, as it would be quite open to any one to say that conclusions about the various periods of life have been considerably unsettled by the great addition to life. So far as I can judge, it is not so, and I have taken care to have my argument read and endorsed by the very highest actuarial authority.

I

In 1908 a paper was read to the Faculty of Actuaries by Dr. James Buchanan on the Improvement in Vitality as disclosed in the British Life Offices' Experience. To this paper is added a series of expert comments thereon, and I gather from these that there is some difference of opinion among the authorities. However, a quotation from a paper by Mr. S. G. Warner, "On the Improve-

ment in Longevity in the Nineteenth Century," seems to be endorsed by all. Mr. Warner's study is based on the summarised returns of the Registrar-General's Reports for England and Wales for the years 1875 and 1900. Mr. Warner holds that the statistics show a distinct decrease in the rate of mortality as the century progresses; a decrease, on the whole, so steady and symmetrical that it may fairly be looked on as a settled and permanent tendency. The improvement is slightly more marked in female than in male mortality, but it is evident and indubitable in both. But the outstanding feature of the whole evidence seemed to Mr. Warner to be that the weight of the improvement fell chiefly on the early years of life.

Dr. Dunlop, in 1905, published a Supplement to the Forty-eighth Annual Report of the Registrar-General for Scotland, in which he gave a series of instructive life-tables. His conclusion was that there has been a progressive improvement at the early and also at the very advanced ages, but a slightly decreased expectation for the middle period of life. For the last decennium of the nineteenth century this decrease of vitality begins for both males and females about the age 35, and continues in each case to about the age 65 or 75. The expectation of life of females is better than that of males at all ages.

The statistics of insured lives give us a certain guidance. But it is evident that lives may now be

selected by stricter medical tests than formerly, and also it may be that the offices are now dealing with a different stratum of the population from that which principally furnished their business in former days. In fact, an eminent actuary, Mr. G. W. Richmond, says that the lower middle class is coming more and more into the insurance business, and the apparent improvement in mortality may simply be due to the fact that we are getting another and better class of lives. Indeed, it seems to be admitted that the selection of lives for insurance is more stringent than it was forty years ago. But, after scrutinising all the figures, Dr. Buchanan came to the conclusion that, while the improvement in vitality had been most marked during the earlier years of life, it has not been confined to them. He thinks also that this vitality is steadily increasing.

In commenting upon Dr. Buchanan's paper, Dr. Dunlop expressed himself emphatically of opinion that there is a marked increase in the expectation of life at early ages and for both sexes; but as life advances the increase becomes less marked, and at the middle periods of life, 35 to 65, the increase not only disappears, but there is a diminution evident. There is an increase of expectation observable in the later periods, 75 to 95. Dr. Dunlop thinks that the series of life-tables for England and Wales, published in 1901, in the sixty-fourth volume of the *Statistical Journal*, by Dr. T. E. Hayward, the Medical Officer

of Health for Haydock, Lancashire, is the only comparable study known to him, and agrees in its results with his. These tables, he says, show the expectation of male life to have markedly increased in the early age-periods, but to have somewhat diminished at the age-periods from 45 to 65, and the expectation of female life to have similarly increased at the early ages, but not to have done so later from 55 to 65. These conclusions are corroborated by the life-tables published in the English Registrar-General's Report.

Dr. Dunlop has prepared a table comparing the Scottish death-rates of the period 1861-70 with those of the period 1891-1900. It is so exceedingly interesting that I venture to reproduce it.

| AGE. | MALES. | | | |
|-------|-----------------------|------------|-------------|---|
| | Death-rate per 1,000. | | Difference. | Difference per cent. of 1861-1870 rate. |
| | 1861-1870. | 1891-1900. | | |
| 0-1 | 150·74 | 159·37 | + 8·63 | + 5·7 |
| 1-2 | 70·20 | 54·32 | -15·88 | -22·6 |
| 2-3 | 36·90 | 22·38 | -14·52 | -39·3 |
| 3-4 | 25·50 | 13·34 | -12·16 | -47·7 |
| 4-5 | 18·44 | 9·40 | - 9·04 | -49·0 |
| 5-10 | 9·65 | 4·91 | - 4·74 | -49·1 |
| 10-15 | 5·15 | 3·18 | - 1·97 | -38·2 |
| 15-20 | 7·35 | 5·16 | - 2·19 | -29·9 |
| 20-25 | 10·36 | 6·85 | - 3·51 | -33·9 |
| 25-35 | 10·45 | 7·72 | - 2·73 | -26·2 |
| 35-45 | 14·04 | 11·43 | - 2·61 | -18·6 |
| 45-55 | 19·08 | 19·03 | - 0·05 | - 0·2 |
| 55-65 | 31·42 | 35·77 | + 4·35 | +13·8 |
| 65-75 | 64·02 | 68·37 | + 4·35 | + 6·8 |
| 75-85 | 139·94 | 138·14 | - 1·80 | - 1·3 |

HAS THE LENGTH OF LIFE INCREASED? 17

| AGE. | FEMALES. | | | |
|-------|-----------------------|------------|-------------|---|
| | Death-rate per 1,000. | | Difference. | Difference per cent. of 1861-1870 rate. |
| | 1861-1870. | 1891-1900. | | |
| 0-1 | 125·76 | 128·10 | + 2·34 | + 1·9 |
| 1-2 | 66·77 | 51·57 | -16·20 | -23·9 |
| 2-3 | 36·76 | 22·13 | -14·63 | -39·8 |
| 3-4 | 26·21 | 13·53 | -12·68 | -48·4 |
| 4-5 | 18·72 | 9·76 | - 8·96 | -47·9 |
| 5-10 | 9·31 | 5·25 | - 4·06 | -43·7 |
| 10-15 | 5·36 | 3·61 | - 1·75 | -32·7 |
| 15-20 | 7·21 | 5·18 | - 2·03 | -28·2 |
| 20-25 | 8·48 | 6·02 | - 2·46 | -29·0 |
| 25-35 | 9·89 | 7·80 | - 2·09 | -21·1 |
| 35-45 | 12·16 | 10·41 | - 1·75 | -14·4 |
| 45-55 | 15·55 | 15·23 | - 0·32 | - 2·1 |
| 55-65 | 25·67 | 29·09 | + 3·42 | +13·3 |
| 65-75 | 54·77 | 58·33 | + 3·56 | + 6·5 |
| 75-85 | 128·24 | 120·98 | - 7·26 | - 5·7 |

It will be seen that the death-rate of infants of less than one year old has slightly increased ; that the death-rates of all age-periods, both male and female, from 1 to 55 have been diminished, the diminution reaching a maximum at the age-period 5 to 10 for males, and at the period 3 to 4 for females, at which ages the diminution was nearly 50 per cent. ; and that the diminution of death-rate of both sexes became less and less until the age of 55 was attained. In the subsequent age-periods, instead of a diminution being observable, there is an increase for both sexes, that increase being at the age-period 55 to 65 for both sexes fully 13 per cent., and at the age-period 65 to 75 fully 6 per cent. After 75 a small diminution of death-rate is

observable in both sexes. These are not gratifying conclusions. The main causes of death among children and young people, such as small-pox, scarlet fever, diphtheria, croup, typhus fever, enteric fever, and tubercle are all now less fatal than they were in the 'sixties. And yet the tables show less improvement than might have been looked for.

II

Is there any prospect of a further improvement in the length of life? Dr. Dunlop is not very hopeful. His statistics show that, taking nearly fifty years' statistics in Scotland, there has been a very marked reduction of the urban death-rate, while the rural death-rate has been practically unchanged. He adds: "It is extremely improbable that the urban death-rate will ever fall much, if at all, below the rural death-rate, and as the urban death-rate recently has been very little above the rural, and the rural rate is not declining, the conclusion is that much further diminution of the urban death-rate, with the consequent diminution of the national death-rate, is unlikely." This might possibly be modified by revolutionary discoveries in medicine. As things are, we are forced to the depressing conclusion that the length of life has increased very little, and that such increase as appears is rather a diminution of the fatalities of the weak than an addition to the vitality of the

strong. The figures of the Manchester Unity of Oddfellows in the comparison between 1866-70 and 1893-97 show a marked increase in the rates of sickness from the age of 20 upwards, and also a steady increase in the range of mortality from the age of 60.

III

To put the matter in a simpler way, a man whose age is anywhere between 35 and 65 has no better expectation of life than his father had at the same age. If there is any change his expectation has slightly diminished. A child in its first year of life, in Scotland, at any rate, has less chance of pulling through than was the case in 1861. It is exceedingly difficult to explain grim facts like these, but I have the weighty support of Mr. Warner in suggesting that, in the middle years, the conditions of modern life are more difficult than they were. Mr. Warner speaks of its intenser strain, its keener competition, its higher pressure; the special forms of fatal disease which it seems to foster.

If I am not wrong, these facts are before our eyes, though few have realised their serious import. The cry of "Too old at forty" has a sinister meaning. In many walks of life men are looked at askance as they begin to pass mid-life. If they happen to be thrown out of situations they have great difficulty in finding a place, and the result is

a wearing anxiety. Also most of my readers have observed how the business of small traders tends to be absorbed and ruined by great stores. In the middle years of last century a man might hope to inherit a business from his father and hand it on unimpaired to his son. This gave a most comforting sense of security. It is worry that kills, they say, and not work. There was less work fifty years ago, and a great deal less worry. Security of tenure is more and more assailed, and the day may come when there will be no such thing, not even among the teachers. Efficiency, no doubt, is promoted by those ruthless methods, and yet a great deal is lost. Perhaps the chief of all things is peace of mind. Peace of mind is harder and harder to keep, and the canker of care seems to eat the life away.

The very small impression made on the death-rate of children in their first year is most perplexing, but perhaps it is to be accounted for by the fact that our population is more and more coming to be an urban population. However, there can be no doubt that the child and the youth have a better chance. On this I cannot do better than quote Mr. Warner. He says : " A democratic society, alive to the common good, and disposed to equip the State with power to secure it, will naturally benefit its members most in the early and defenceless years of their lives. The child and the youth, healthily housed, guarded more efficiently from infectious disease, trained more carefully both in body and in

mind, with schools and playgrounds placed at their service by the State, and free access to the best medical and surgical skill in case of need—these make acquaintance with our modern social conditions at their most beneficent point, and reap the richest good from them.” But upon the whole, it seems plain that these figures are a challenge to the State, and in particular a challenge to science, and especially to physicians and surgeons.



III

“HIS ACTS BEING SEVEN AGES”

FROM the beginning it has been customary to divide life into periods, each with its own characteristics. But even if I could, I should not attempt any full account of these classifications. One, however, is so famous that it must be given at a little length.

I

In Shakespeare's *As You Like It* we have :

“All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players :
They have their exits and their entrances ;
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages. At first the infant,
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.
Then the whining schoolboy, with his satchel,
And shining morning face, creeping like snail
Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,

Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad
Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,
Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,
Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel,
Seeking the bubble reputation
Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice,
In fair round belly with good capon lined,
With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,
Full of wise saws and modern instances ;
And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts
Into the lean and slippered pantaloon,
With spectacles on nose, and pouch on side ;
His youthful hose, well saved, a world too wide
For his shrunk shank ; and his big manly voice,
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes
And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,
That ends this strange, eventful history,
Is second childishness and mere oblivion,
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything."

On this, as on most Shakespearian subjects, we have the fullest information in the magnificent Variorum edition of H. H. Furness. Shakespeare did not mean that dramatic pieces were distributed into seven acts. It sufficed for him that there were several acts in a play, and that human life long before his time had been divided into seven periods. Proclus is said to have divided the life-time of man into seven ages, over each of which one of the seven planets was supposed to rule. "The *first age* is called *Infancy*, containing the space of foure yeares. The *second age* continueth ten yeares until he attaine to the age of fourteene : this age is called *Childhood*. The *third age* con-

sisteth of eight yeares, being named by our auncients *Adolescencie* or *Youthhood*; and it lasteth from fourteene till two and twenty yeares be fully compleate. The *fourth age* paceth on, till a man have accomplished two and forty yeares, and is tearmed *Young Manhood*. The *fifth age*, named *Mature Manhood*, hath (according to the said author) fifteene yeares of continuance, and therefore makes his progress so far as six and fifty yeares. Afterwards, in adding twelve to fifty-six, you shall make up sixty-eight yeares, which reach to the end of the *sixt age*, and is called *Old Age*. The *seaventh* and last of these seven ages is limited from sixty-eight yeares, so far as four-score and eight, being called weak, declining, and *Decrepite Age*. If any man chance to goe beyond this age (which is more admired than noted in many), you shall evidently perceive that he will returne to his first condition of Infancy againe." Hippocrates likewise divided the life of man into seven ages, but differs from Proclus in the number of years allotted to each period. It is not likely that Shakespeare invented the distribution; it seems that the notion floated in the society of his time, and was part of the traditionary inheritance of all. He exhibited the periods in a more brilliant and impressive way than his predecessors. Furness suggests that the number of ages was seven, because there were three steps of ascent, the soldier stood on the summit, and then followed three steps

of descent. Five steps would have been too few, and nine would have been too many. This is curious, and perhaps nothing more.

II

In Dante's "Convito" (xxiii.-xxviii. of Book IV.) he expounds the course of "the noble soul" through its Four Ages of this mortal life, taking as his text his "Canzone," III. 7 :

"The soul that this high virtue doth adorn,
Doth keep it not concealed ;
For from the moment that she weds the body
She shows it until death.
Obedient, gracious, full of noble shame,
She holds her early way,
And even the body she makes beautiful,
And all its limbs alert.
In years of youth, most temperate and strong,
Full of affection and courteous praise,
Finding delight in lawful joys alone.
And in her later age,
Prudent and just and liberal to all ;
Rejoicing in herself
To hear and speak of all that serveth man.
Then in the fourth and last part of her life,
Weds her again to God,
Contemplating the end for which she waits,
And blessing the past years."

"Human life," says Dante, speaking of the division usual "in our books," "is divided into four ages. The first is called *Adolescence*, that is, increase of life ; the second is called *Youth*, that is, the age that can help to, or give, perfection—and

thus it is understood to be the perfect age, because no one can give except of what he has ; the third is called *Old Age* ; the fourth *Decrepitude* " (p. 350).

Dante regards man's life as an arch, all life being "caused by Heaven," and Heaven being in itself, and revealing itself in all living creatures, "not as a complete circle, but as part of one." "Because the master of our life, Aristotle, recognised this arch, . . . he appears to consider our life as an ascent and a descent." "Where the highest point . . . is, it were difficult to say . . . but in most men, I believe, it is between the thirtieth and fortieth year. And I believe that in perfect natures it would be in the thirty-fifth year" ("Inf." v. 15, 20). "And this reason affects me, that our Saviour Christ, whose nature was perfect, chose to die in the thirty-fourth year of His age. . . ." (p. 347). "And these divisions are made in like manner in the year. . . . And so it is with the day" (in its canonical hours, "leaving the sixth"—noon—"as the centre"). "And therefore the Gentiles said that the chariot of the sun had four horses. . . ."

Speaking then of this ascent and apex and descent of human life, Dante assigns (for the majority of men) twenty-five years to Adolescence ; twenty to Youth (ten being before and ten after the arch's central point, the age of thirty-five) ; and another twenty-five to Old Age, which is reckoned as beginning at forty-five and ending at seventy.

"But," he continues, "because Adolescence does

not begin with the beginning of life, taking it in the way here described, but about ten years afterwards, and because our life hurries in its ascent, but holds back in its descent, . . . therefore it happens that beyond Old Age about ten years remain to us of life, perhaps a little more or less. And this period is called Decrepitude. Therefore we see that Plato (who may be said to have had the best of natures, . . .) lived for eighty-one years, according to the testimony of Tullius in his '*De Senectute*.' And I believe that if Christ had not been crucified, and had lived out the term of His life, as allotted by nature, He would have been translated in His eighty-first year from a mortal to an eternal body."

III

Messrs. Sidgwick and Jackson recently published a reprint of "*The Kalendar of Shepherds: being Devices for the Twelve Months*." It was apparently written in 1296, and divides life by the months of the year in periods of six years. I copy the notes.

JANUARY

"Take the first six yeare of January, the which is of no vertue nor strength, in that season nothing on the earth groweth. So man after he is borne, till he be six yeare of age, is without witte,

strength, or cunning, and may do nothing that profiteth."

FEBRUARY

"Then commeth February, and then the dayes beginne to waxe in length, and the sunne more hotter, then the fieldes beginne to waxe greene: So the other sixe yeares til he come to twelue, the child beginneth to grow and serue and learne such as is taught him."

MARCH

"Then commeth March, in the which the laborer soweth ye earth and planteth trees, and edifieth houses. The child in these six yeares waxeth big to learn doctrine and science, and to be faire and honest, for then he is xviii. years of age."

APRIL

"Then commeth April, that the earth and the trees is couered in greene and flowers, and in euery part goods increaseth abundantly. Then commeth the child to gather the sweet flowers of hardines; but then beware that the cold windes and stormes of vices beat not downe the flowers of good maners, that he should bring man to honour, for then he is xxiiii. yeare old."

MAY

"Then commeth Maie, that is both faire and pleasant, for then birdes sing in woodes and forrests

night and day, the sunne shineth hot. And as then is man most joyfull and pleasant, and of liuelier strength and seeketh playes, sports, and lusty pastime, for then is he full xxx. yeare."

JUNE

"Then commeth June, and then is the sunne highest in his meridiornal, he may ascend no higher in his station, his glimering golden beams ripend the corne. And when man is xxxvi. yeare, he may ascend no more, for then hath nature giuen him beauty and strength at the full, and ripeneth the seedes of perfect understanding."

JULY

"Then commeth July, that our fruits bin sette a sunning, and our corne a hardening, but then the sunne beginneth a little for to descend downeward. So man then goeth from youth toward age, and beginneth to acquaint him with sadnesse, for then he is xlii. yeare."

AUGUST

"After that then commeth August: then we gather in our corne, and also the fruits of the earth. And then doth man his diligence to gather for to find himselfe withall, in the time that he may neither get nor win, and then after that vi. yeares is he xlviii. yeare old."

SEPTEMBER

“Then commeth September: that wines be made, and the fruits of trees be gathered. And then therewithall he doth freshly beginne to garnish his house and make prouision of needfull things for to liue in winter, which draweth very nere. And then is man, in his most joyfull and coragious estate, prosperous in wisdome, purposing to gather and keepe as much as should be sufficient for him in his old age, when he may gather no more, and these sixe yeares maketh him liiii. yeares.”

OCTOBER

“And then commeth October: that all is into the foresayd house gathered but corne, and also other maner fruits. And also the labourers soweth newe seedes in the earth, for the yeare to come. And when he that soweth nought, shall nought gather. And then in their other sixe yeares a man shall take himselfe unto God for to do penance and good works, and then the benefits the yeare after his death, he may gather and haue spirituall profite, and then is man full in the terme of lx. yeares.”

NOVEMBER

“Then commeth Nouember: that the dayes be very short, and the sun in maner gineth little heat, and the trees looseth their leaues. The fields that were greene, look horie and gray. When al maner

of hearbes be hidde in the ground, and then appeareth no flowers. And then winter is come that a man hath understanding of age, and hath lost his kindly heate and strengthe: His teeth beginne to rotte, and also to chatter, and then, hath he no more hope of long life, but desireth to come to the life euerlasting, and these sixe for this moneth maketh him three score and sixe yeares."

DECEMBER

"Then commeth December: full of colde with frost and snow, with great windes and stormy weather, that a man may not labour nor nought do: the sun is then at the lowest that it may descend, then the trees and the earth is hid in snow, then is it good to hold them nie the fire, and to spend the goods that they gathered in summer. For then beginneth mans haire to wax white and gray, and his body crooked and feeble, and then he loseth the perfect understanding, and that six yeares maketh him ful lxxii. yeare, and if he liue any more, it is by his good guiding and dieting in his youth. Howbeit, it is possible that a man may liue till he be an hundred yeares of age, but there are but few that come thereto."

IV

Great weight has been given to the division of human life into periods of seven years. In fact,

there is a popular belief that the human body is entirely changed every seven years. On what authority this notion rests I cannot tell ; but most people know that the ages seven, fourteen, twenty-one, forty-two, sixty-three, and seventy are considered to be significant. Twenty-one marks the time when majority is attained. Seventy is the Scriptural term for human life. On the ages forty-two and sixty-three I have curious notes from the lives of the heroes of the Reformation.

The forty-second year was held by astrologers to be dangerous. When Melanchthon reached it he prepared for death and made his will (1539). Dr. J. W. Richard writes : " Melanchthon had now reached the climacteric year of forty-two. Believing that death was near at hand, he made his last will and testament."

A learned German work, Georg Oergel's "*Vom jungen Luther*," contains in its first chapter an attempt to prove that Luther was born in 1482, not, as is usually understood, in 1483. The only original authority for the date 1483 is Melanchthon, but Oergel points out that before Luther's death Melanchthon's researches had led him to the conclusion that Luther's birth-year was 1484. Why did he change his view ? Oergel says : " We have more than once remarked on Melanchthon's fondness for astrological studies. Though Luther had a low opinion of these arts and liked to tease his friend Philip about his hobby, there was one point

on which they both agreed. Luther, quite as much as Melanchthon and many of his contemporaries, attached great importance to the seventh or so-called climacteric year of life. He called it also *annus variativus*, ‘for the seventh year always changes man’s constitution.’ Very special importance was attached to the sixty-third year (*climacter senum*), in which nine times seven years was attained. This was always considered a specially critical year, in which the exceptionally increased alteration in the sap and strength of the bodily frame might easily bring with it peril to life. Many examples from antiquity and modern times were quoted with regard to persons who had died in this year. Luther died on February 18, 1546.” And Oergel’s argument is that the great amateur astrologer, Melanchthon (whose letters are literally crowded with occult matters), changed his views on the date of Luther’s birth, because if he had kept to his original date of 1484, Luther would not have attained his climacteric year, that is, the date at which he ought, by all proper rules, to have died. “It was,” says Oergel, “a scientific duty for Melanchthon to make his definite decision in favour of 1483 as Luther’s birth-year. Only by the acceptance of this year would the natural law receive its due tribute, and the world could be informed that the *climacter senum* had exercised its deadly influence upon Dr. Martin also.”

Contemporaries and friends of Melanchthon like

Paul Eber, or enemies like Dr. Ratzeberger, accepted the coincidence without a question. "Luther," wrote the Elector's physician, Ratzeberger, "died in his climacteric year, which is specially dangerous for the old."

V

Sir Thomas Browne, in his book "*Enquiries into Vulgar and Common Errors*," disputes the importance "of the great Climacterical year, that is, Sixty-three." He begins by saying that the days of men are usually cast up by septenaries, and every seventh year is conceived to carry some altering character with it, either in the temper of body or mind or both. But among all other, three he singles out as the most remarkable, seven times seven or forty-nine, nine times nine or eighty-one, and seven times nine or the year of sixty-three: which is conceived to carry with it the most considerable fatality; "and, consisting of both the other numbers, was apprehended to comprise the vertue of either: is therefore expected and entertained with fear, and esteemed a favour of Fate to pass it over. Which notwithstanding many suspect to be but a Panick terrour, and men to fear they justly know not what: and to speak indifferently, I find no satisfaction; nor any sufficiency in the received grounds to establish a rational fear." Browne goes on to check the lists of men who are said to have died in their climacterical year.

He refers to the letter of Augustus sent to his nephew Caius, encouraging him to celebrate his birthday because he had now escaped sixty-three, the dangerous year to man. Browne admits that Aristotle died in this year, adding, however, that owing to his delicate health it was wonderful that he lived so long. He quotes the Biblical declaration that the days of man are three score and ten, and points out that the same is affirmed by Solon, as Herodotus relates in a speech of his to Cræsus. It is by the consent of elder times that seventy is regarded as a final year. But as to the names given of those who died at sixty-three, Browne takes them one by one, and finds that they are wrongly assigned. Thus Plato is said to have died at sixty-three; but he lived to be eighty-one. Of course, a catalogue of remarkable persons who died in other years can easily be compiled. But, according to Browne, there is no special fatality about the climacteric year. When, in due course, we come to the year, we shall be better able to determine the truth as to this.



IV

“WHO CAN TELL WHAT A BABY
THINKS?”

THE FIRST FIVE YEARS OF LIFE

It will be noted by careful readers that the hour-hand of the clock has moved to seven. The beginning of life I take as six o'clock in the morning, and the first five years of life are included between six and seven. At seven o'clock a child is five years old.

We are still perhaps on the threshold of knowledge as regards childhood. It is only within recent years that people have thought it worth while to record the sayings of children. The ancients doted on their children, and even made offerings of toys to their dead children for playthings in the world of spirits; but I believe that, with one doubtful exception, not a single letter by a Roman or Greek

child survives. No voice of a Greek child comes to us across the gulf of time. Psychology, a science still in its infancy, is slowly furnishing us with facts; but the faithful record of what happens in childhood begins late. Fielding, Gray, Cowper, and Goldsmith in particular, began to depict the wonder; but I believe Mr. Scudder is right when he puts Wordsworth first among the English-speaking interpreters of childhood. This poet conceives of childhood as distinct and individual; the isolated existence of the child is more important to him than the child's relation to its parents. He is one of the first to say distinctly that childhood is more than innocence, more than grace; it is something which the child brings to earth; it is the consciousness of a spiritual world which passes away as the earthly life penetrates the soul.

"Hence in a season of calm weather,
Though inland far we be,
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore."

Wordsworth says himself that in his childhood he had a deep sense of the indomitableness of the spirit. He persuaded himself that, whatever might become of others, he could not die. He was to be translated, like Enoch and Elijah, to heaven. Childhood comes from the Divine, and has an echo of the Divine in its ears till life has dulled it.

Landor says : " Children are not men or women ; they are almost as different creatures, in many respects, as if they never were to be one or the other ; they are as unlike as buds are unlike flowers, and almost as blossoms are unlike fruits."

I

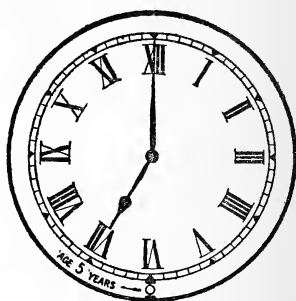
In the writings of Jean Paul Richter we find some help. Richter speaks of the early years as " the misty years," as " the first and thickest mist of life." A verse is quoted by Dr. Noah Porter in his " Psychology " :

" Who can tell what a baby thinks ?
Who can follow the gossamer links
By which the mannikin feels his way
Out from the shores of the great unknown,
Blind and wailing and alone,
Into the light of day ?"

Richter says that the three early years are the years which precede the opening of the gate of the soul, which is language. He attaches the greatest possible importance to those three years, and counsels that education should do as much as possible during the first year of life. Then it can effect more with half the effort than it can with double in the eighth year, when the sense of freedom is aroused and all the conditions of being are indefinitely multiplied. Farmers believe it most advantageous to sow in mist, and the first

seeds of education should fall in the mist of life. "For the child—yet in native innocence, before his parents have become his serpents on the tree—speechless, still unsusceptible of verbal empoisonment—led by customs, not by words and reasons, therefore all the more easily moved on the narrow and small pinnacle of sensuous experience;—for the child, I say, on this boundary line between the monkey and the man, the most important era of life is contained in the years which immediately follow his non-existence, in which, for the first time, he colours and moulds himself by companionship with others. The parent's hand may cover and shelter the germinating seed, but not the luxuriant tree. Consequently, first faults are the greatest; and mental maladies, unlike the smallpox, are the more dangerous the earlier they are taken. Every new educator effects less than his predecessor; until at last, if we regard all life as an educational institution, a circumnavigator of the world is less influenced by all the nations he has seen than by his nurse."

Richter would have us in these years to pay special regard to morality. In mature years great examples of moral worth pass by and influence our course no more than a flying comet does that of the earth.



But in the deep heart of childhood the first inner or outer object of love or injustice throws a light or a shadow immeasurably far along all its future years. The first fall and the first fight influence us our whole life long. Every first thing continues for ever with the child : the first colour, the first music, the first flower paint the foreground of his life. Richter prescribes that the child should be protected from all that is impetuous and violent and even from all sweet impressions. For this reason the crying of children, if composed of a union of discord, hastiness, imperiousness, and passion ought to be guarded against by all due means. I have read somewhere:

“As soon as we begin to live
Then we begin to die ;
Into the world we weeping come,
Our whole life tells us why.”

During the first three years the child lives in the animal cloister, and only approaches us through the speech-grating of natural signs. The whole human being is as yet a closed bud where the blossom is concealed. The warmth of happiness should be provided for the human child. Anything is better than a melancholy child absorbed and weighed down by one black poison-drop of the present. “Think of a child led to a scaffold ; think of a Cupid in a Dutch coffin ; or watch a butterfly after its four wings have been torn off, creeping like a worm, and you will feel what I mean.”

II

It is at three that the most important event in childhood, the birth of the *ego*, appears to take place. Fichte is said to have given a great dinner—as great a dinner as a professor could give—on the day on which his son first used *ich*.

Richter says: "In earliest times the word 'philosophy'—though there was also a second word, 'orient'—was to me an open heaven's gate, through which I looked on to long, long gardens of joy. Never shall I forget the inner sensation, hitherto untold to any, when I was present at the birth of my self-consciousness, of which I can specify both time and place. One morning, when still quite a young child, I was standing under the doorway, and looking towards the woodstack on the left, when suddenly the internal vision, 'I am an *ego*,' passed before me like a lightning-flash from heaven, and has remained with me shining brightly ever since; my *ego* had seen itself then for the first time and for ever. Deceptions of the memory are here hardly conceivable, since no story related to me could mingle its additions with an occurrence which took place in the shrouded Holy of Holies of a human being, and whose strangeness alone has given permanence to such everyday circumstances as those which accompanied it."

In his "Letters" James Smetham writes: "My first awakening to consciousness, as far as I can

remember, was in a valley in Yorkshire, outside the garden-gate of my father's house, when at the age of two. I have a distinct remembrance of the ecstasy with which I regarded the distant blueness of the hills, and saw the laurels shake in the wind and felt it lift my hair."

Mary Howitt, in her "Autobiography," regards this epoch as taking place, in her experience, one evening as she was returning from a forest-ramble with her father: "It was the first evidence in my mind that I could think. I remember very well the new light, the gladness, the wealth of which I seemed suddenly possessed. It has curiously connected itself in my mind with passing a pinfold. That particular spot seemed like the line between rational and irrational existence; and so childish was I in intellectual life, that it seemed to me as if, before I passed the pinfold, I could only say and think 'Bunyan'—such was the expression in my mind—but that, after passing it, I had the full use of all intelligible speech."

After this period the child's mind often rapidly develops. One of the quaintest descriptions of childhood is Lady Stephen's account of her boy, Fitzjames Stephen, who grew up to be one of the most trenchant controversialists among English writers. It is recorded of him that he wrote one of his most powerful articles in the *Pall Mall Gazette*—that on the death of Lord Palmerston—with many sobs and tears. Before he was three

months old he had "a calm, composed dignity in his countenance," and at the age of half a year he showed himself most determined to have his own way. Before he was three he was known in the family as "the little preacher." Before he was five he complained to his father that he had "naughty thoughts"; but when his father advised that they should be sent away, and the advice was acted upon, he confessed to being so proud of his skill in dismissing them that he "wanted to get them that he might send them away." At an earlier date he pointed out to his mother, who had punished him for stubbornness by depriving him of his tea, that such punishment only "provoked him to be much more naughty." "Did you ever know your father do a thing because it was pleasant?" asked his mother of the small boy. The answer was: "Yes, once—when he married you." This composed and solemn confidence has often been noted in babies. The tender-hearted Melanchthon, writing from Nürnberg to his son-in-law on February 9, 1552, says: "*Carissime fili, Tuæ filiæ desiderio mirifice adficio. Quoties placidissimum ejus vultum et ocellos mente intueor, doleo me isthinc abesse.*"

III

When John Stuart Mill was three years old he was initiated by his stern father into the Greek

language. When Isaac Watts was three he could read the Bible; and if he received any little present of money he would come running to his parent, crying eagerly, "A book, a book! Buy a book!" May his tribe be multiplied! Jonathan Swift could read any chapter in the Bible at three years of age. Of Kingsley it is said that he had preached a sermon when four years old, and that he wrote poems before he was five.

Among the early sketches of Sir Edwin Landseer, now in possession of the nation, is one of a fox-hound, drawn from the life at the age of five. Allan Cunningham says that it is quite marvellous for its thorough conception of form and appreciation of character. Mozart at four composed melodies, which his father wrote from his dictation. When he was little more than five he took part in the comedy *Sigismundus Hungariæ Rex*, performed in the Hall of the University of Salzburg in 1761. This was his first public appearance.

Miss Yonge, a careful observer, in her "Life of John Coleridge Patteson," the martyr bishop, says: "Five years old is in many cases the age of a great deal of thought. The intelligence is free from the misapprehension and misty perceptions of infancy; the first course of physical experiments is over, freedom of speech and motion has been attained, and yet there has not set in that burst of animal growth and spirits that often

seems to swamp the deeper nature throughout boyhood."

Young Patteson was able to read at that age, and received on his fifth birthday from his father the present of a Bible. He read it eagerly, puzzled his brains as to what became of the fish during the Flood, and once, when suddenly called to the nursery, begged to be allowed to "finish the binding of Satan for a thousand years."

IV

The change that takes place in the first five years of life may be illustrated from two poems, one by Swinburne and one by Charles Lamb. Swinburne's is a Birth-song for Olivia Frances Madox Rossetti, born September 20, 1875:

"Now, ere thy sense forget
The heaven that fills it yet,
Now, sleeping or awake,
If thou couldst tell, or we
Ask and be heard of thee,
For love's undying sake,
From thy dumb lips divine and bright mute speech
Such news might touch our ear
That then would burn to hear
Too high a message now for man's to reach."

This is the thought of Wordsworth—not the thought of pre-existence in the ordinary use of the word, but the thought of something which has come straight from the arms of God.

Charles (or is it Mary?) Lamb writes in lines little known :

“A child’s a plaything for an hour ;
Its pretty tricks we try
For that or for a longer space ;
Then tire and lay it by.

“But I knew one that to itself
All seasons could control ;
That would have mocked the sense of pain
Out of a grievèd soul.

“Thou straggler into loving arms,
Young climber-up of knees,
When I forget thy thousand ways
Then life and all shall cease.”

V

Can we trace the bent of life from these first years ? When a Chinese boy is twelve months old he is put into a large sieve, and round him are placed a set of money-scales, a pair of scissors, a foot-measure, a brass mirror, a pencil, ink, paper, ink-slab, and other articles. The assembled friends watch to see which thing he first handles, and if he takes up a book or a pencil they feel sure he is to be a scholar. But at a year a baby is hardly fitted to choose his profession. When Mazzini first walked with his mother they saw an old beggar seated on the steps of a church. The child suddenly stood still, and his mother, thinking he was frightened at the white beard and pic-

turesque rags of the old man, stooped to carry him away. But he broke from her and ran rapturously forward, threw his arms round the poor man's neck, kissing him again and again, and cried out to her, "Give him something, mother; give him something." The old man was affected even to tears. He tenderly returned the child's caresses, and, addressing Signora Mazzini in pure Roman accents, said: "Love him well, lady; he is one who will love the people."

When Allan Cunningham was four years old he heard Burns read "Tam o' Shanter" to his father. Burns took his written copy over when it was finished to the farm at Sandbed to read it to his friend and neighbour. Standing in the ingle-neuk between the farmer's knees was a boy, a little child. He remembered the circumstance as freshly at forty as when he was four. "Burns's looks and his voice," wrote Allan Cunningham, "cannot well be forgotten."

VI

I may add that for many years three has been the minimum age at which a child can be entered on the register of a public elementary school. According to Mr. Barrie, in his "Little White Bird," it has another signification: "David struck three and went into knickerbockers. The faces of mothers are a clock, in which you may read the faces of their young. When he is three they

are said to wear the knickerbocker face, and you may take it from me that Mary assumed that face with a sigh ; fain would she have kept her boy a baby longer, but he insisted on his rights."

Five, I believe, is regarded as the earliest age at which a pupil should begin work in a school other than a kindergarten : up to this age the pupils are technically known as babies—at five they become technically infants, and remain so till seven.



V

THE NEW HERO AND HEROINE: FROM FIVE TO TEN

IN this chapter the hour-hand is at eight o'clock, and the period dealt with is between five and ten.

Mr. Watts-Dunton describes the child as the New Hero. Small is the figure made by the child in literature and art until comparatively recent times. Shakespeare in *Arthur and Mamillius* pictures him vividly and truly; but, on the whole, he was formerly ignored and trampled on. The reaction was long in coming; but when Victor Hugo and Tennyson and Swinburne and Miss Rossetti and Miss Ingelow with many others fell down and worshipped him, the New Hero became rich in poet-laureates and in court painters. Mostly they caught him at the time when he was emerging into consciousness, but no rigid line can be drawn

between my first period and my second. Humorous witchery, beautiful mystery, and pathos are the characteristics ascribed to the New Hero by one of his most loving students.

I

The humorous witchery of the Young Hero has had homage from feminine worshippers even more than from men, though Mr. Swinburne's poem, "A Child's Pity," holds its own with any of its kind. The Hero's humorous witchery is acknowledged in that complexity of feeling which is shown when he is fondly teased by his worshippers "caressing him with grating teeth," and with words of mock anger. In "Christabel" the feeling is rendered and explained :

"A little child, a limber elf,
Singing, dancing to itself,
A fairy thing with red round cheeks
That always finds, and never seeks,
Makes such a vision to the sight
As fills a father's eyes with light ;
And pleasures flow in so thick and fast
Upon his heart, that he at last
Must needs express his love's excess
With words of unmeant bitterness."

And Coleridge further explains it in lines as magical and as memorable :

"Perhaps 'tis pretty to force together
Thoughts so all unlike each other ;
To mutter and mock a broken charm,
To dally with wrong that does no harm.

Perhaps 'tis tender, too and pretty
At each wild word to feel within
A sweet recoil of love and pity."

The phrase "sweet recoil" is final in its manner. So I might quote from Victor Hugo, from Sydney Dobell, especially that lyric in "The Roman," beginning :

"Oh, Lila! round our early love
What voices went in days of old!"

from Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Little Pansie," and many other sources. The mystery of a child's existence is touchingly felt and expressed in some lines of Alexander Smith :

"O thou bright thing fresh from the hand of God!

'Tis ages since He made His youngest star,
His hand is on thee as 'twere yesterday,
Thou later revelation. Silver stream,
Breaking with laughter from the lake divine
Whence all things flow."

The infinite pathos that surrounds a distressed child has been piercingly rendered by Mrs. Browning in her poem, "The Cry of the Children," and by Victor Hugo in many places. Mr. Watts-Dunton thinks that the pathos of a neglected child is more quickly felt by the poor than by the richer classes. It is the poor who have pity on the New Hero when, unwashed and in rags, he turns a somersault for a copper, or fashions dirt-pies for the pure love of cookery. Mr. Watts-Dunton tells an experience

of his own. Once, when waiting in the train at Vauxhall, his eye was taken by the little street-arabs trying to make merry with life—trying to make merry even with the squalid and fetid life in which they find themselves down there, they know not how. In the hope of getting a copper thrown from a carriage-window, these little creatures, of ages varying from five up to twelve, perform all sorts of gymnastic feats, chanting the while a ditty,

which sounds merry or intensely sad according to the ear that hears it. For ten minutes this will often continue, during which time one, two, or even three coppers will perhaps be thrown to the chanting gymnasts—thrown always, Mr. Dunton observes, from third-class windows, and never from the first class.



Once Mr. Watts-Dunton travelled third class to find out what kind of people were there who could afford to throw an occasional penny to acrobatic skill when stripped of spangles. On his first journey he found near him a sturdy and defiant-looking young fellow, whom he would have taken to be a bricklayer's labourer out of work. They watched the acrobats standing on their poor little heads in the mud, and by and by the poet's fellow-traveller said to himself, "Poor little chaps!

Tough work that, on empty bellies "; and, digging down into his pocket, he found at last a penny and threw it to them. The man was out of employment, seeking work with only a few coppers in his pocket, and "dining off baccy." He knew the meaning of it all. There is no more touching sight in the world than that of a child shuddering along a London alley, its poor little limbs gleaming reproachfully at the passer-by through the rags that hang about them—its poor little lean face wearing sometimes the look of chubby innocence, but more often the sharp, eager, wolfish, cunning look born of a dreadful knowledge of the struggle for life, deeper and truer than all the knowledge of all the *savants*. On this may be read, for I have no space to quote them, Victor Hugo in "Les Pauvres Gens," "Chose Vue un Jour de Printemps," the descriptions of the children in "L'Année Terrible," the episodes in "Quatre-Vingt-Treize," but especially in "Petit Paul" and "Guerre Civile."

II

The great fact in the second lustrum of life is that its years are passed in the realm of imagination. In my own childhood we lived in a house beside a village; every article of furniture was to us a personality. The president of the little tribe was the largest thing in the house—an old-fashioned mahogany wardrobe. Each room had its president,

but the wardrobe was president of all the rooms. We imagined the neighbouring village as a hostile city. We lived in a castle with a deep moat. Although our house was small, there were many books in it, and every book was a soldier in time of need. Day by day the story was carried on, of our attacks upon the village or the attacks of the village upon us. Night by night the president of the rooms, along with representatives from the other furniture, met together in a war-council. It was of these things that we talked for at least three parts of our time. Story-books helped us. We planted the scenes of the stories in our own environment.

Mr. Canton, in his admirable essay on Children's Sayings, remarks that the doll is one of the best teachers of a child. Wonderful are the ways of a girl with her doll. "I am an anxious-minded doll-mother," observed a true make-believer, as on a windy night she gave up her eider-down to her favourite and "tucked her in" with tender solicitude. In the same way children talk inexhaustibly with imaginary companions. Everything is alive. According to Professor Sully, it is not till about thirteen that the perfect child's faith in doll-dom passes away.

Brutes, as we are pleased to call them, are "lesser brethren" to a child. The animals encourage his fellowship in a beautiful, pathetic, wistful way. Cats, who are not at all patient as a rule with grown-up people, will allow children to

do anything with them that they please, and will submit to being dressed, put into perambulators, and wheeled about, with angelic complacency. Dogs are very kind, but perhaps not so kind. It was through their friendship with children that the lower brethren were raised in the Middle Ages from oppression and were permitted to attend church on Christmas Day. And even now pity for the brute and recognition that it has its rights, even a dim understanding of the fact that the animal world is a great mystery—these are feelings that endure and grow with us, and we owe them to the child.

Newman said: "We have more real knowledge about the angels than about the brutes; they have, apparently, passions, habits, and a certain unaccountableness, but all is mystery about them. We do not know whether they can sin or not, whether they are under punishment, whether they are to live after this life; we inflict very great sufferings on a portion of them, and they in turn, every now and then, retaliate upon us as if by a wonderful law. . . . Cast your thoughts abroad on the whole number of them, large and small, in vast forests, or in the water, or in the blue air, and then say whether the presence of such countless multitudes, so various in their natures, so strange and wild in their shapes, living on the earth without ascertainable object, is not as mysterious as anything Scripture says about the angels."

III

This period is the time of passionate affection, expressed while it is not replaced. I borrow from Mr. Canton: "Cyril was seven years old. He loved his mother very dearly, and had been separated from her sometimes, as she had to go to India. Once when she came to wish him good-night, he was under the bed-clothes. He came out with a flushed little face, and said, as he hugged her tight, 'Mummie, do you know what I was doing? I was asking God to love you as much as I do. He *couldn't* love you more.' His mother was very delicate, and one day in winter he said: 'Oh, father, please shut window; mummie may catch cold, and we *must* take care of our best.' A loving-hearted wee man said sweetly to his mother, 'Mother, I'm sorry I'm not your father, for then I would love you so much and take care of you.' 'How much do you love mother?' a little girl was asked. 'Up to the sky, along a bit, and down on the other side.' Two little lads were discussing how much they each loved father and mother. The elder said, 'Oh! I couldn't live without "muvver": if she ever dies, I shall go and dig her up.' His brother replied, 'Yours is a very stupid plan; when "farver" dies, I'm going to have him stuffed!'"

IV

Mr. Kenneth Graham, in his book, "The Golden Age," has a chapter, "The Roman Road," which seems to be as true a picture of a child's imaginings as any ever written. Among all the roads of the neighbourhood, that road marched straight and full for the open downs. The children called it "The Knights' Road," because they thought that they might some day see Lancelot and his peers come pacing along it on their great war-horses. But the boy had heard that all roads led to Rome, and his governess had spoken about a strange road that ran right through the misty Highlands to the Eternal City. So the boy was fascinated by the thought that, at the other end of the white ribbon which rolled itself off from his feet, was Rome. He tried to fancy what it would be like when he got there. He put the Coliseum down in the middle, and patched up the rest from the little grey market-town where he had his hair cut twice a year. Place was found for the Red Lion, the Blue Boar, the doctor's substantial red-brick house, the façade of the new Wesleyan Chapel, which was thought very fine, and the Roman populace were supposed to potter about in smocks and corduroys, twisting the tails of Roman calves, inviting each other to beer in musical Wessex. The boy happened upon an artist who had a house in Rome, and

received his young friend's confidences very kindly. When he went away the child thought, "Was he possibly one of those vanished knights I had been looking for so long? Perhaps he would be in armour next time—why not? He would look well in armour, I thought. And I would take care to get there first, and see the sunlight flash and play on his helmet and shield, as he rode up the High Street of the Golden City. Meantime there only remained the finding it. An easy matter."

FROM FIVE TO TEN

I PUT down a few biographical facts about children in this period.

A marvel of precocity was Sir William Rowan Hamilton (1805-1865), the illustrious mathematician. "He was at three years of age a superior reader of English, and considerably advanced in arithmetic; at four a good geographer; at five able to read and translate Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and loving to recite Dryden, Collins, Milton, and Homer; at eight he has added Italian and French, and gives vent to his feelings in extemporised Latin; and before he is ten he is a student of Arabic and Sanskrit."

Age 6

St. Catharine of Siena, like St. Teresa, had a remarkable experience at the age of six. Father Raymond of Capua, the Dominican confessor of her family, says that when the child was walking with her brother Stephen along the Valle Piatta, she saw on the opposite side, above the Church of the Preaching Friars, a most beautiful room, adorned with regal magnificence, in which was seated on an imperial throne Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world; with Him were the princes of the Apostles, Peter and Paul and the holy Evangelist John. Catharine saw that the Saviour fixed on her the eyes of His Majesty, and with a tender smile lifted over her His right hand, and, making the Sign of the Cross, left with her the gift of His eternal benediction. Thus the saint, according to old records, received her call. At this early age, or earlier, Catharine received from her parents' friends the pet name of Euphrosyne, to signify the grief-dispelling effect of her conversation.

At six the admirable St. Teresa, while "yet a child, outran maturity, and durst plot a martyrdom."

"Be Love but there; let poor six years
Be posed with the maturest fears
Man trembles at, you straight shall find
Love knows no nonage, nor the mind;
'Tis love, not years or limbs, that can
Make the martyr, or the man.
Love touched her heart, and lo it beats
High, and burns with such brave heats;
Such thirsts to die, as dares drink up
A thousand cold deaths in one cup.
Good reason; for she breathes all fire;
Her white breast heaves with strong desire
Of what she may, with fruitless wishes,
Seek for amongst her mother's kisses."

Mozart (1756-1791) made his first professional tour through Europe when he was six years old.

Schiller (1759-1805), in his seventh year, disappeared during a tremendous thunderstorm, and was found, after anxious search, perched high on the bough of a tree, gazing at the tempestuous sky, in rapture with the beauty of the lightning and eager to see where it was coming from.

When Meyerbeer (1791-1864) was six years old his pianoforte-playing was a matter of wonder.

When Carlyle (1795-1881) was a boy of about six years of age, being left alone in the house one winter's day, an old man came to the door to ask for something to eat. There was not any food in the house; but the boy bade the man wait while he dragged a form in front of the dresser so that he might get his "penny-pig"—an earthenware money-box—off the shelf; this he broke and gave the old man all the money in it. "And," said Carlyle, "I never knew before what the joy of heaven was like." When Dean Stanley heard the story he exclaimed, "Had that happened in the Middle Ages the old man would have turned out to be Some One else."

I think it is at this period particularly that the musical gift shows itself. When Jenny Lind (1820-1887) was five or six years

of age, a Swedish actress accidentally heard her singing, and was so surprised by the marvellous purity of her voice and the talent and native skill displayed in its management, that she spoke of it to Herr Croelius, a music-master resident in Stockholm. He heard the child sing, and instantly determined on presenting her to the Count Pücke, as a candidate for admission to the musical school attached to the Theatre Royal of which he was manager. After hearing her sing the Count was more astonished than Herr Croelius had been, and consented to her admission.

Age 7

When Handel (1685-1759) was seven years old his father went to Weissenfels on a visit, and after much difficulty the boy got permission to accompany him. At Weissenfels the young Handel obtained an opportunity of playing upon an organ, some one lifting him on to the stool, and he showed so much skill that the Duke of Saxeweissenfels sent for both father and son and persuaded the father to give rein to his son's genius. In this way was Handel emancipated.

Age 8

When Benjamin West (1738-1820), afterwards President of the Royal Academy, was eight years old, a party of Indians visited his home in Springfield, Massachusetts, and, being pleased with his rude sketches, taught him how to prepare the red and yellow colour with which they stain their weapons.

It was at eight that Paganini (1784-1840) composed, under the direction of his father, a sonata of so difficult a nature that none but himself could execute it. He performed in public at the age of nine.

Age 9

Hannibal (247-183 B.C.), at the age of nine, swore on the altar of sacrifice eternal enmity to Rome, and this determined his future career.

William the Conqueror (1027-8-1087) was about this age when, amid the general anarchy that followed the death of his father in 1035, he began to show his capacity for rule.

Dante (1265-1321) saw Beatrice for the first time when she was at the beginning, and he at the end, of their ninth year.

In the *Memoirs of the Life of Anna Jameson* (1794-1860), the art-critic, a sour but excellent and indefatigable lady, we read that she had a happy childhood. Once, when she was nine, she was moved by some supposed wrong done to her little sisters by a person in whose charge they had all been left at Newcastle, while their parents went to Scotland. So the little Anna planned a flight, and actually set forth one evening, accompanied by the three other little conspirators, who blindly followed their leader, to walk to Scotland, each being provided for the journey with "a tiny bundle of clothes, containing a change for Sunday," and as much bread and butter as could possibly be stowed away in the fronts and pockets of their frocks. As the oldest and strongest, Anna charged her own shoulders with the weight of a many-caped gig-cloak (presumably a garment of the period), belonging to their governess, under cover of which they could, she said, all sleep at night under the hedges; and, as for food, when their own slices of bread and butter gave out, they need only knock at some cottage door on their way and say they were four little children going to Scotland to find their father and mother, and no one would refuse them a drink of milk and a crust, Anna was quite sure.

Sometimes the scientific genius shows itself very early. Clerk Maxwell (1831-1879) was one of the greatest physicists of the Victorian period. His mother died when he was nine years old, but the relations between the widowed father and his only child were the happiest conceivable. To explain mechanism to the boy, and to show him "how it doos," was the father's chief delight during James's childhood; and, indeed, it can have been no sinecure office to have to reply to his constant question, "What's the go o' that?"—repeated, if the answer was suspected of vagueness, in the emphasised form, "But what's the particular go of it?"

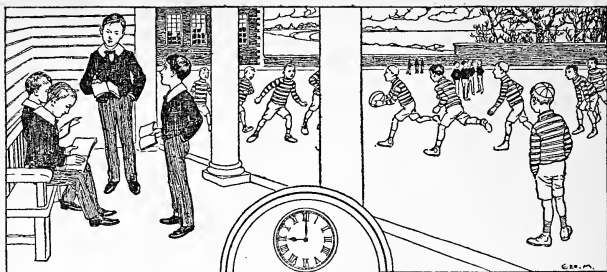
Age 10

When Bach (1685-1750) was ten he lost his father and went to live with his brother, the organist, at Ohrdruf, who put great obstacles in the way of his musical studies; but the boy as-

sented his talent by copying out some music he had clandestinely obtained with a prodigious expenditure of time and labour.

Milton, Cowley, and Byron all wrote verses first at ten, and Laurence Sterne (1713-1768) used to say that at the age of ten, when in a school near Halifax, he wrote with a brush in large letters on the wall, "Lau. Sterne." The usher severely whipped him, but was taken to task by the master, who said, in Sterne's hearing, "that never should that name be effaced, for I was a boy-genius."

Mendelssohn (1809-1847) made his first appearance as a pianist when he was ten.



VI

THE SCHOOL-BOY: FROM TEN TO FIFTEEN

THE clock is now at nine, marking the completion of fifteen years of life. The period under review is from ten to fifteen, which is normally the period for the school-boy. It is true that wherever compulsory education is found the commencing age is either six or seven. Very often when the age of six is quoted in the regulations it means six completed, that is the seventh year. From thirteen to fourteen is the period at which compulsory education usually stops. Glancing down a list of the compulsory ages in the various countries of the world one finds himself left with the clear impression that six to seven begins it, and thirteen to fourteen ends it. Sixteen is the age that finishes the education of pupils at secondary schools of the second grade,

while eighteen completes the education of pupils at secondary schools of the first grade. My divisions cannot be pedantically accurate.

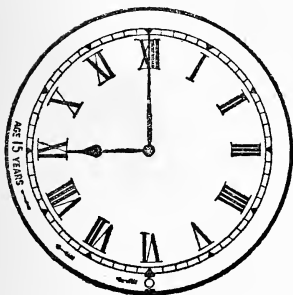
There was a day, not very distant, when boys in Scotland entered the University at twelve or thirteen. A relative of mine, Alexander Nicoll, born a poor man's son at the village of Monymusk, Aberdeenshire, went to college in Aberdeen at twelve, removed to Oxford at fourteen, graduated there at eighteen, and when he was twenty-five became Regius Professor of Hebrew and Canon of Christ Church, being made D.C.L. in the same year. Nicoll, who was the predecessor of Dr. Pusey, promised great things as an Oriental scholar, but he died when only thirty-five—fairly worn out with the labours and privations of his youth. There is a legend that he induced his father to send him to college by the promise that he would live upon two hard-boiled eggs a day. Adam Smith (1723–1790) entered Glasgow University (1737) at fourteen, and Bacon (1561–1626) was sent to Trinity College, Cambridge, at twelve. Dean Church wonders what boys were like at that time. Whatever the learning of the University, the boys took their places with men, and consorted with them almost on equal terms. Grotius (1583–1645) was at eleven the pupil and companion of J. J. Scaliger (1540–1609), was called to the Bar at sixteen, and published a learned book. When Bacon was hardly sixteen he was admitted to the Society of “Ancients” of

Gray's Inn. But nowadays we treat our children more sanely.

What I have to say about the school-boy may take the form of a comparison between the past and the present. The school-boy of to-day is very fortunate.

I

In looking back at the good old times we discover that places of instruction were scenes of perpetual torture and agony.



“From his experience of his first school Martin Luther speaks in later years of the vexations and torments with declining and conjugating and other tasks which school-children in his youth had to endure. . . . Schoolmasters, he

says, in those days were tyrants and executioners, the schools were prisons and hells, and, in spite of blows, trembling, fear, and misery, nothing was ever taught. He had been whipped, he tells us, fifteen times one morning, without any fault of his own, having been called on to repeat what he had never been taught.”¹

Fuller declared that many a schoolmaster occupied himself more in tearing his scholars' flesh

¹ Köstlin's "Life of Luther" (Eng. Trans., Longmans).

with whipping than in giving them good education. Tusser writes in his own Life :

“From Paul’s I went to Eaton sent,
To learn straightwaies the Latin phrase,
When fifty-three stripes given to me
At once I had.
For fault but small, or none at all,
It came to passe, thus beat I was ;
See, Udall, see the mercy of thee,
To me, poor lad.”

It was charged against terrible teachers that they caused many tongues to stammer that spoke plain by nature, and that they dulled many who were quicker than themselves by mauling them about their heads. Rough and rude also were the domestic arrangements, and the shades of the prison-house did indeed close upon the growing boy. Home was the only refuge of the youthful Briton. It was his asylum and his strong fortress. But even at home there was often much parental severity ; harsh fathers and mothers were by no means rare. “When I am in presence either of father or mother,” says Lady Jane Grey, “whether I speak, keep silence, sit, stand or go, eat, drink, be merry or sad, be sewing, playing, dancing, or doing anything else, I must do it, as it were, in such weight, measure, and number, even so perfectly as God made the world ; or else I am so sharply taunted, so cruelly threatened, yea, presently sometimes with pinches, nips, bobs and other

ways which I will not name for the honour I bear them, so without measure misordered, that I think myself in hell till time come that I must go to Mr. Aylmer, who teacheth me so gently, so pleasantly, with such fair allurements to learning, that I think all the time nothing whiles I am with him. And when I am called from him, I fall on weeping, because whatsoever I do else but learning is full of grief, trouble, fear, and whole misliking unto me." In these times "breaking-up" day was hailed with a rapturous joy expressed in the school-boy anthem "Dulce Domum :"

"Post grave tædium
Advenit manium
Meta petita laborum.

.

Concinamus ad Penates
Vox et audiatur:
Phosphore, quid jubar
Segnius emicans
Gaudia nostra moratur ?"

But in our time school-life has undergone a transformation. The home is no less dear, but the school is no longer pure weariness and misery. Things are not yet perfect ; all school-boys are not well housed and well fed ; all masters are not just ; but the general situation is improved, and indeed ennobled. In particular, the great gulf that used to be fixed between boys and masters has been narrowed and made shallow. Schoolmasters take

a more human view of their duties. Often the strongest bonds of affection unite them with their pupils. Learning is less a matter of drudgery, and may even be associated with pure pleasure. In short, the character of the school-boy has been raised with his fortunes.

II

Notwithstanding there is in the ordinary mind a great fear of the ordinary boy. One observer tells us how he once saw the Strand thrown into terror, confusion, and distress by the unaided wit of two boys. It was on a foggy, damp December evening, when the lights were all but vanquished and the pavement slippery. The boys had got a suit of clothes and some straw, out of which they made up an image sufficiently like a man to pass muster in that uncertain light. With this, counterfeiting the action of affectionate sons taking home a beloved but intoxicated father, they would suddenly appear in front of some passing omnibus, and then, affecting to lose all presence of mind, allow their helpless parent to fall almost under the feet of the horses. The scene may be imagined. Terror of the passengers, horror of the driver, horses down through having been sharply turned aside or pulled up on the greasy pavement, general agitation—which culminated when at length an omnibus with more way on than usual actually passed over the body,

the wretched driver of course suffering the mental agonies of a homicide until relieved by seeing the straw intestines of his victim. It is not surprising that strong comments were passed on the performance.

Why should the penny-a-liner, with his usual flowery infelicity, write about the "street arab"? If there is a being in every respect the opposite of the grave, decorous, reverential Arab, it is the boy of the streets. Boys used to be fond of the Red Indian, and represent him as well as they could, and it was granted that, of all human beings, the boy and the red man were the only two to whom cruelty *per se* was a pleasure. "We hear people talk of the fine, free, generous nature of boys, just as we hear them talk of the noble red man of the forest, the noble savage, the gentleman of nature, etc., when they really mean a greasy, whooping, screeching, tomahawking savage." Even the boy who was careful about his dress and partial to ladies' society was characterised as holding the same relation to the boy pure and simple as the town Indian with a civilisation consisting of trousers and fire-water sustains to the original red man of the prairie.

A common question addressed by school-boys to one another is "Who's your tailor?" The cruelty of this is clear in the case of those who have either outgrown their clothes or who have been dressed by thrifty parents to allow for expansion. The following, from "Tom Brown's Schooldays," probably falls

between this lustrum and the next, but belongs here. After the fight Brooke sends for Tom, and asks :

“Where did you learn that throw?”

“Down in the country when I was a boy.”

“Hullo! why, what are you now?”

I have preserved a genuine letter of a school-boy to his mother which was printed in the *Spectator* some years ago:

“MY DEAR MA,

“I wright to tell you I am very retched and my chilblains is worse again. I have not made any progress and do not think I shall. i am very sorry to be such an expence, but I do not think this schule is any good. One of the fellows has taken the crown of my best hat for a target. he has now borrowed my watch to make a water wheal with the works, but it wont act. Me and him have tried to put the works back, but we think some wheals are missing as they wont fit. I hope Matilda’s cold is better. I am glad she is not at schule. i think i have got consumption. the boys at this place are not gentlemanly, but of course you did not know this when you sent me here. i will try not to get bad habits. The trowsers have worn out at the knees. i think the tailor must have cheated you; the buttons have come off, and they are loose behind. i dont think the food is good, but I should not mind if I was stronger. The piece of meat I

send you is off the beef we had on Sunday, but on other days it is more stringy. There are black beadles in the kitchen and sometimes they cook them in the dinner, which cant be holesome when you are not strong. Dear Ma, I hope you and Pa are well, and do not mind my being so uncomfortable because i do not think i shall last long. Please send me some more money as i o 8d. if you cannot spare it I think I can borrow it of a boy who is going to leave at the half quarter and then he wont ask for it back again, but perhaps you wd. not like to be under an obligation to his parents, as they are tradespeople. I think you deal at their shop. I did not mention it or I dare say they wd. have put it down in the bill.

“Yr. loving but retched son,

“ ———.”

III

I make some notes from the psychologists in regard to the ages between ten and fifteen.

Between eleven and twelve there is a remarkable retardation in the bodily growth, as there is between seven and eight.

At about eleven the child is expected to become somewhat critical and indeed fault-finding.

About the thirteenth year the power of drawing inferences first begins to appear with some degree of vigour.

Between nine and twelve there occurs a period

of comparative slowness of mental development generally regarded as the preparation for the great spurt that immediately follows.

The American psychologist Earl Barnes says from fifteen to eighteen there is no such persistent exercise of the critical judgment in matters theological as there is between twelve and fifteen.

IV

The subject of precocity comes in here. The term may be used to denote premature activity of the intellect, and also the far rarer phenomenon of unseasonable maturity, or completeness, of the mental powers. Neither is perhaps to be desired. The brain that is unusually active after four, six, or ten years of growth often lapses into a condition of ordinary dulness before the age of twenty or thirty has been reached. There are few recorded cases where a mind is matured when, in the common course of things, it would be still adolescent. Pitt (1759-1806) was mature at three-and-twenty when he became Chancellor of the Exchequer, but he was no more fit at three-and-forty—he “did not grow, but was cast.” Keats (1795-1821) is not a relevant example, for, great as his poetry is, it is patently incomplete, and this may be said to be one of its pervading charms. “Hyperion” may be an exception, and that is left a fragment.

On the other hand, boys who fail to distinguish

themselves in ordinary studies have sometimes a vision of their true calling. T. H. Green (1836–1882) when at Rugby wrote to his father: “The reason why most people think me idle is that I cannot think it right to devote myself to the ordinary studies of school and college, which to me, at least, are of very little profit; and hence the fruits of my labours do not at present appear, but I hope they will do in time.”

They did. Idealism, mysticism, transcendentalism—these were not new. They have been as persistent through the ages as the buzzing in Socrates’ ears that would not allow him to listen to Crito’s common sense. But few have expounded them with a more potent and vital charm than Thomas Hill Green.

FROM TEN TO FIFTEEN

Age 12

WHEN, at the age of twelve, Mohammed (570-632) accompanied his uncle Abu-Talib to Bassorah, he met with a Christian monk who is said to have predicted for him a great future.

Joan of Arc (1412-1431) was in her thirteenth year when her first vision came to her, and she heard the voices summoning her to deliver France.

Melanchthon went to Heidelberg University at twelve, after having spent one year only at the Pforzheim Grammar School. He matriculated in October 1509.

Nelson (1758-1805) began as a midshipman on board the *Raisonnable* under his uncle, Captain Suckling.

Macaulay (1800-1859) had shown his marvellous memory long before twelve, and the one fault Hannah More had to find with him was that he would not read prose, poetry being a passion with him from his earliest years.

At twelve Mendelssohn (1809-1847) was at work on his first published quartet.

Age 13

Alexander the Great (356-323 B.C.) became at thirteen the pupil of Aristotle, and awoke to his most powerful ambitions.

When thirteen Michelangelo (1475-1564) was apprenticed to the painter Ghirlandajo, and had already shown wonderful progress.

At the age of thirteen Charlotte Corday (1768-1793) entered a convent, and for some years was a model of piety. She dreamed

of nothing but the closing of her life, which was then scarce opening at the first page.

Age 14

Van Dyck (1599-1641) in his fifteenth year began to study under Rubens.

At fourteen Henry Temple (1784-1865), afterwards known as the redoubtable Viscount Palmerston, wrote to his friend Hare: "I cannot agree with you about marriage, though I should be by no means precipitate about my choice."

At the age of fourteen William Rowan Hamilton (1805-1865) wrote a letter in Persian to the Persian Ambassador, who was then in Dublin. The strain is sufficiently Oriental: "As the heart of the worshipper is turned toward the altar of his sacred vision, and as the sunflower to the rays of the sun, so to thy polished radiance turns, expanding itself, the yet unblossomed rosebud of my mind." Soon afterwards he acquired several other languages, Eastern as well as Western. This combination of an extraordinary talent for languages with a yet higher genius for mathematics is very rare.

Marie Antoinette (1755-1793) was married at fourteen and suddenly introduced into the strange world at Versailles.

Margaret, Countess of Blessington (1789-1849), was married at the same age.

Anna, elder daughter of Melancthon, was married at fourteen to George Sabinus.

Age 15

Sophocles (496-405 B.C.) was fifteen years of age when the Greeks overthrew the Persians in the great sea-fight at Salamis, and he was chosen to lead the pæan sung by a chorus of boys before the trophy raised to commemorate that victory.

Bacon (1561-1626) was scarcely fifteen when the great thought took possession of him that the method of studying nature was wrong, and he asked himself if a better might not be found. Spedding says: "I believe it ought to be regarded as the most important event in his life; the event which had a greater influence than any other upon his character and future course."

Prescott (1796-1859), the historian, was only fifteen when in a

college frolic at Harvard he received a blow from a large, hard piece of bread, which struck the very disc of his left eye. He entirely lost the sight of this eye and the other became very dim.

Among young authors who published at fifteen is Abraham Cowley (1618-1667). Clerk Maxwell (1831-1879) wrote for the Royal Society of Edinburgh a paper "On the Description of Oval Curves, and those having a Plurality of Foci." "When we consider how little geometry Maxwell had at this time been taught, the production of this paper must be regarded as an astonishing evidence of early power which can hardly be paralleled, except by what is recorded of the youthful maturity of Blaise Pascal."

Edward I. (1239-1307) was married in 1254.

Mary, Queen of Scots, married in 1558 the Dauphin Francis (afterwards Francis II. of France) at the age of fifteen years and five months.



VII

STURM UND DRANG: FROM FIFTEEN TO TWENTY

TO-DAY the clock is at ten, and the period dealt with is that between fifteen and twenty.

We come now to the most critical, difficult, and complex period in human life. I shall make no attempt at a minute analysis of facts and sensations. In an American book, "Adolescence," by Stanley Hall, much may be found about the physical changes of this period and their results. The American psychologists have also had much to say about the fact of conversion in this lustrum or that which preceded it. It is not for me to break the reticence on sexual matters which has come from the wisdom of the ages, and on religion I do not touch.

The phrase *Sturm und Drang* (storm and striving)

was first used in a drama by Klinger. It describes a great movement which took place in Germany in the 'seventies of the eighteenth century. Men tried to break with the traditions of the past, to abolish all laws and rules, hoping in this way to write something entirely new, fresh, and original, though the results were in some ways bad. The *Sturm-und-Drang* Movement influenced Herder, Goethe, and Schiller, and they conquered its extravagances, and transformed the whole tendency in a living and powerful way.

Perhaps the obvious features of this age are best described by Professor James. He says that, with the child, life is all play and fairy tales and learning the external properties of "things." "With the youth, it is bodily exercises of a more systematic sort, novels of the real world, boon-fellowship and song, friendship and love, nature, travel and adventure, science and philosophy; with the man, ambition and policy, acquisitiveness, responsibility to others, and the selfish zest of the battle of life." There is much truth in this, but battle and ambition are quite as evident in youth as they are in manhood.

I

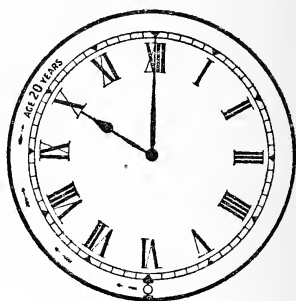
Perhaps, indeed, it might be true to say of college days that they are healthy in proportion as they are wrestling days. The elasticity of young power measures itself cheerfully against the other

forces of the world. It delights in the sense of honourable rivalry. It respects that establishment of natural aristocracy which results from such rivalry. There is an element in it of reverence for intrinsic nobility of character, and in fine natures for the strange influence of the weak things of the world. The healthiest college-life is spent in hearty battle of all kinds, and such battle in the end settles the truth of life. A man comes to know his own strength and weakness, and thus finds the first condition of sure order and true peace. There are many exceptions. There are those who stand aloof and think. The majority, however, will do best to measure themselves against the obstacles of life, and thus prove their moral mettle. At the beginning of this period there must be the usual moral dangers which beset strong, hearty, animal natures. Later on there must be the half-morbid fermentation, through which almost all men pass in early manhood. If these are well got through, and if a noble and simple character emerges from them, life opens fairly and with a beautiful promise.

II

Professor James lays stress on the finality of the choices made at this period. They are "the long, long thoughts of youth," and it is hardly possible to break from their hold. "If a boy grows up alone at the age of games and sports, and learns

neither to play ball, nor row, nor sail, nor ride, nor skate, nor fish, nor shoot, probably he will be sedentary to the end of his days ; and, though the best of opportunities be afforded him for learning these things later, it is a hundred to one but he will pass them by and shrink back from the effort of taking those necessary first steps, the prospect of which, at an earlier age, would have filled him with eager delight." In the same way, exposure to bad company during the time when passion is first active may make a man a loose liver all his days, while chastity kept at first makes the same easy later on. What the teacher must seek is "to strike the iron while it is hot, and seize the wave of the pupil's interest in each successive subject before its ebb has come, so that knowledge may be got and a habit of skill acquired—a headway of interest, in short, secured, on which afterward the individual may float. There is a happy moment for fixing skill in drawing, for making boys collectors in natural history, and presently dissectors and botanists ; then for initiating them into the harmonies of mechanics and the wonders of physical and chemical law. Later, introspective psychology and the metaphysical and religious mysteries take their turn; and, last of all, the drama of human



affairs and worldly wisdom in the widest sense of the term. In each of us a saturation-point is soon reached in all these things: the impetus of our purely intellectual zeal expires, and unless the topic be associated with some urgent personal need that keeps our wits constantly whetted about it, we settle into an equilibrium, and live on what we learned when our interest was fresh and instinctive, without adding to the store."

III

All this is just, but by no means complete. One great thing to be mastered in youth is thoroughness. This is what gives significance to University distinctions. These may not prove superior mental power, and they do not guarantee persistence of success through life, but they are a proof, so far as they go, that their recipients know at least what knowledge means. Matthew Arnold defines charlatanism as the "confusing or obliterating the distinctions between excellent and inferior, sound and unsound, or only half sound, true and untrue, or half true." Napoleon one day said, when somebody was spoken of in his presence as a charlatan, "Charlatan as much as you please, but where is there not charlatanism?" There is charlatanism everywhere, and the charlatan often seems to rise high and grow rich. But the disinterested love of knowledge brings its own reward, and strangely ennobles character. Perhaps this quality, as much

as any other, has made France illustrious. It thrills the heart to read of Berthelot refusing to take out patents on discoveries which would have brought him a colossal fortune, although he had six children to keep. Offered by sugar-refiners a life-annuity of at least a quarter of a million francs for a new method of extracting glucose, he said: "I will give it to you for nothing. We work for honour in our French laboratories." Pasteur sowed broadcast his tubes of safety and life. Chevreul had only to say a word to become the master of millions. He kept his lips resolutely closed, and died comparatively poor. Curie rejected a rich man's offer of half a million francs for a few decigrammes of radium, because he wanted the precious stuff to experiment on.

Dr. Osler once told a company of medical students the master-word of life—the word which is the open sesame to every portal, the great equaliser in the world, the true philosopher's stone, which transmutes all the base metal of humanity into gold—the word which makes the stupid bright, the bright brilliant, and the brilliant steady, the word in the heart which makes all things possible and without which all is vanity and vexation, the word which brings hope to the youth, confidence to the middle-aged, repose to the aged. That master-word is *Work*; and if in the period of storm and stress it is written on the heart and bound on the forehead, all will be well.

Professor James says, in his characteristic way, that God and duty will become real if a little sacrifice is made to each every day. "Act as if I were, and thou shalt know that I am."

IV

The definite aim to excel in contests or the general undefined ambition after future fame characterises, or should characterise, this period. It is in truth a time of striving :

"Always in his nature
Eager antagonism, not passive spirits,
Oppose the dangerous devil's mastery,
But sworded and aggressive warriors,
Who, with swift charge, beat down the mustered ranks
And all day long maintain the weary war,
And die in faith of unseen victory."

Sometimes the ambitions are prophetic. Carlyle wrote at eighteen to a fellow-student : "But, O Tom ! What a foolish, flattering creature thou art ! To talk of future eminence in connection with the literary history of the nineteenth century to such an one as me. Alas ! my good lad, when I and all my fancies and reveries and speculations shall have been swept over with the besom of oblivion, the literary history of no century will find itself the worse. Yet think not, because I talk thus, I am careless about literary fame. No, Heaven knows that, ever since I have been able

to form a wish, the wish of being known has been the foremost."

Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865) earned his first dollar when he was eighteen years old, and he tells his story thus: "We belonged, then, to what they call down South the 'Scrubs.' People who do not own land or slaves are nobody there, but we had succeeded in raising, chiefly by my labour, sufficient produce, as I thought, to justify me in taking it down the river to sell. After much persuasion I had got the consent of my mother to go, and had constructed a flat-boat large enough to take the few barrels of things we had gathered down to New Orleans. A steamer was going down the river. I was contemplating my new boat, and wondering whether I could make it stronger or improve it in any part, when two men with trunks came down to the shore in carriages, and, looking at the different boats, singled out mine, and asked, 'Who owns this?' I answered modestly, 'I do.' 'Will you,' said one of them, 'take us and our trunks out to the steamer?' 'Certainly,' said I. I lifted their trunks and put them on the deck. The steamer was about to put on steam again, when I called out, 'You have forgotten to pay me.' Each of them took from his pocket a silver half-dollar and threw it on the bottom of my boat. I could scarcely believe my eyes as I picked up the money. You may think it was a very little thing, and in these days it seems to me like a trifle, but it

was a most important incident in my life. I could scarcely credit that I, the poor boy, had earned a dollar in less than a day ; that by honest work I had earned a dollar. The world seemed wider and fairer before me ; I was a more hopeful and thoughtful boy from that time."

It is in this period that multitudes of humbler people are touched by the force that is to mould the race of life :

"Some impulse rose,
Or some intent upstole
Of that enkindling ardency from whose maturer glows
The world's amendment flows."

V

Professor James draws a contrast between the young woman of twenty and a young man of twenty. The young woman's character is finished in all its essentials. She acts with intuitive promptitude and security in all domestic circumstances. She has formed her likes and dislikes and her opinions. A boy of twenty has a character still gelatinous, uncertain what shape to assume, "trying it on" in every direction. He is a being of no definite contour, but this ignorance of the manner in which he shall express the power he feels is the condition which ensures that his brain will in the end do its work better. In short, this lustrum is a time of *Sturm und Drang*. But the

fine nature should pass through these fermenting years of youth, and win its way clear to the calmer practical world beyond. Montaigne says: "For my part, I believe our souls are adult at twenty such as they are ever like to be, and as capable then as ever."

FROM FIFTEEN TO TWENTY

Age 16

LADY JANE GREY (1537-1554) was sixteen when she was executed. She saw her husband's bleeding body on her way to the scaffold.

Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) wrote a treatise on conic sections.

Leopardi began his first literary work.

Byron's (1788-1824) life became warped and thwarted by his discovery that Miss Chaworth was engaged to John Musters.

Age 17

The young Euripides (480-406 B.C.) was meant at first to be a professional athlete; at seventeen he tried painting; at twenty-five he brought out his first tragedy.

Joan of Arc was seventeen when she rode forth holding her arms. She, who was so lately a peasant, was now a shining figure in bright armour, the sword of St. Catherine at her girdle, a light axe in her hand.

Leibnitz (1646-1716) was seventeen when he wrote "De Principio Individui."

Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792) came up to London at seventeen.

Warren Hastings (1732-1818), when seventeen, was sent out to India as a writer in the service of the East India Company.

Thomas Chatterton (1752-1770) at this age left Bristol disgusted with the profession to which he was articled, and came to London.

At seventeen Elizabeth Fry wrote in her diary: "I daily fall lower in my own esteem. What an infinite advantage it would be to me to occupy my time and thoughts well! I am now seventeen, and if some kind and great circumstance does not

happen to me, I shall have my talents devoured by moth and rust."

Shelley wrote a number of wild romances in his boyhood, of which "Zastrozzi" was published about 1809, and "St. Irvyne, or the Rosicrucian," at the end of 1810.

Bulwer Lytton's (1823-1873) first book was the Oriental tale of "Ishmael," published in 1820. After that, till his death, Edward Bulwer was his own pitiless taskmaster, building up a splendid but crumbling reputation.

Age 18

Brother Lawrence, author of "The Practice of the Presence of God," says that God had done him a singular favour, in his conversion at the age of eighteen.

Thomas Wentworth (1593-1641), afterward Earl of Strafford, married Lady Margaret Clifford in 1611, and entered Parliament in 1614.

Sir William Blackstone (1723-1780) was entered in the Inner Temple at eighteen and renounced poetry. In a "Farewell to the Muse," he thus salutes his profession :

"Then welcome business, welcome strife,
Welcome to the cares and thorns of life,
The visage wan, the purblind sight,
The toil by day, the lamp by night,
The tedious forms, the solemn prate,
The pert dispute, the dull debate,
The drowsy bench, the babbling hall,
For thee, fair Justice, welcome all."

Lessing's (1729-1781) first comedy, *Der Junge Gelehrte*, was finished and successfully produced at Leipzig when he was eighteen.

At eighteen Thomas Chatterton died by his own hand.

John Keats (1795-1821) was eighteen when Clarke read him Spenser's "Epithalamium," and he at once procured the "Faery Queen." "He ramped through it," says Clarke, "like a young horse turned into a spring meadow." This was the birth of his own poetic gift.

Christina Rossetti (1830-1894) wrote in 1848, when eighteen years old, the well-known lines beginning :

“ When I am dead, my dearest,
Sing no sad songs for me.”

Here is a story with which Matthew Arnold opens his essay on “A French Critic on Goethe.” M. de Syon had written enthusiastically that “The Eternal created Chateaubriand to be a guide to the universe.” Whereupon Joseph de Maistre observed : “On voit bien, excellent jeune homme, que vous avez dix-huit ans ; je vous attends à quarante.”

Shakespeare was eighteen when he married Anne Hathaway, his senior by eight years. He was at this time apprentice to his father, who was a butcher.

At eighteen Sarah Siddons (1755-1831) made her unhappy marriage at Trinity Church, Coventry, November 26, 1773.

Age 19

The Venerable Bede (c. 673-735) was ordained deacon at this exceptionally early age.

Jacob Böhme, born at Gorlitz 1575, married in 1594.

Anthony Van Dyck (1599-1641) was admitted into the guild of St. Luke as a master.

Edmund Waller's (1605-1687) earlier poems were written about this age.

In 1745 Thomas Gainsborough (1727-1788) married Margaret Burr, a young lady with an annuity of £200 a year, and settled in Ipswich.

At nineteen George Washington (1732-1799) was appointed by the Government of Virginia to the command of one of the military districts into which it was divided, and his pay was £150 a year.

Schiller (1759-1805) completed his tragedy *The Robbers*.

Shelley (1792-1822) at nineteen married Harriett Westbrook, and at twenty was busy with “Queen Mab.”

Byron published in 1807 his “Hours of Idleness,” which was severely criticised in the *Edinburgh Review*. The result was “English Bards and Scotch Reviewers,” and the beginning of his fame.

C. H. Spurgeon was called to New Park Street Chapel, Southwark, in 1854, and in a very short time was the most popular preacher of his day.

Age 20

Correggio (*c.* 1494–1534) was employed when twenty to paint a picture of “The Virgin Enthroned” by the Franciscan Friars, and this work is now in the Dresden Gallery.

Charles V. (1500–1558) of Germany was crowned Emperor at Aix-la-Chapelle in 1520. At this time Soliman the Magnificent was carrying the Ottoman Empire to the very pinnacle of its power. Pirates infested the Mediterranean, and Luther was burning the Papal Bull. Thus Charles was confronted by a stupendous task.

Darnley was less than twenty-one when he was murdered at Kirk o’ Field, Edinburgh, in February 1567.

John Bunyan (1628–1688) was probably not more than twenty when he was married. His wife and he were “as poor as might be,” without “so much household stuff as a dish or spoon between them.” The influence of his wife and the books she brought him made an entire change in him, but his terrible religious struggle did not come to an end for some years.

James Boswell (1740–1795) came to London at twenty with his father in the hope of obtaining a commission in the Guards. They consulted the Duke of Argyll, and he discouraged the military idea. “My lord,” said the Duke, “I like your son; this boy must not be shot at for three shillings and sixpence a day.”

Sarah Siddons made her first appearance on the London stage in 1775.



VIII

“THE TURN OF THE ROAD AND YOU.”

—FROM TWENTY TO TWENTY-FIVE

THE clock is now at eleven, and the period treated from twenty to twenty-five. There is no age for love, and it has been affirmed that in modern times the spectacle of an elderly man in love has ceased to appear ridiculous, and has become interesting and pathetic. Our ancestors laughed at an elderly bachelor with a grand passion, and were more merciless to elderly spinsters. Marianne Dashwood, in Miss Austen's story “Sense and Sensibility,” when she was a girl of seventeen, declared that “thirty-five has nothing to do with matrimony.” Thirty-five was the age of her lover, Colonel Brandon, and Marianne defended him from jokes on the ground of his advanced years. “When is a man to be safe from such wit,” she cried, “if age and infirmity will not protect him?” Happily

Marianne consented to marry the Colonel two years afterwards, in spite of his thirty-seven years and his flannel waistcoat. M. Bourget, greatly daring, has declared that fifty-three is the ideal age for love. Readers of Oliver Wendell Holmes will remember how he refers to Balzac's saying that men are most dangerous to the hearts of susceptible women at the age of fifty-two. "Balzac," says he, "ought to know, if what is said by Goethe about him is true, that each of his stories must have been dug out of a woman's heart." But fifty-two is a high figure. However that may be, it is certain that men and women keep their youth much longer than they once did. Still youth is the natural time for love, and though elderly people may be very wise in loving, it is best to love early.

And no doubt youth anticipates this counsel, and there are many love-affairs before twenty-one. Most of them are temporary, and leave nothing but pleasant memories. Some of them, however, are disastrous indeed. Walter Scott's first love was also his last, and her name had power to stir his heart till that heart ceased to beat. "It is because he knew passion too well that he is not a poet of passion. There is nothing in Scott like the melancholy or peevish repining of the lovers in 'Locksley Hall' and in 'Maud.' Only in the fugitive farewell caress of Diana Vernon, stooping from her saddle on the darkling moor before she rides into the night, do we feel the heart-throb of

Walter Scott. Of love, as of human life, he knew too much to speak."

Less is known of the passion which in a manner wrecked the life of J. M. W. Turner. He fell in love with the sister of an old Margate schoolfellow. After the usual exchange of vows, Turner left his portrait with the loved one, and, promising to write frequently, started on a long sketching tour. In his absence the girl's step-mother intercepted his letters, and, not hearing from her lover and thinking he had forgotten her, she gave her hand to another, and the day was fixed for the wedding. A week before, Turner returned; but it was too late. The young lady thought herself bound in honour, and Turner left her in bitter grief, declaring he would never marry. One of Turner's biographers lays much stress on this episode, and thinks that it wrought on the painter "incalculable harm by souring his great and generous nature. The misery of his scathed life, and the constant dwelling on those sad words, 'the fallacies of hope,' prove the unchangeability of his passion."

Heine fell in love when he was about nineteen, but his love was more than crossed; it was flung back with disdain, and the lady married another. This was a great and critical time in the life of the poet. The vision of the lost love hangs over his poems. He seems to be singing to one he cannot forget and can never win.

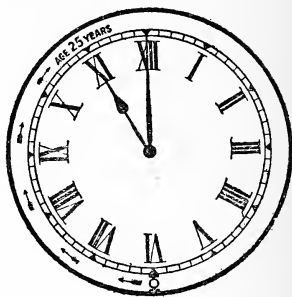
I

But first loves are not always to be taken so seriously. I hold that the test of the true Dickensian is neither Calverley's test nor Swinburne's, but the power to name at once the lovers of Mrs. Nickleby. Kate asked her mother whether she had many suitors.

"'Suitors, my dear!' cried Mrs. Nickleby, with a smile of wonderful complacency. 'First and last, Kate, I must have had a dozen at least.'

"'Mamma!' returned Kate in a tone of remonstrance.

"'I had indeed, my dear,' said Mrs. Nickleby; 'not including your poor papa, or a young gentleman who used to go at that time to the same dancing-school, and who *would* send gold watches and bracelets to our house in gilt-edged paper (which were always returned), and who afterwards unfortunately went out to Botany Bay in a cadet ship—a convict ship I mean—and escaped into a bush and killed sheep (I don't know how they got there), and was going to be hung, only he accidentally choked himself, and the Government pardoned him. Then there was young Lukin,' said Mrs. Nickleby, beginning with her left thumb and checking off



the names on her fingers—‘Mogley—Tipslark—Cabbery—Smifser——’” Unfortunately, at this point the gentleman with the vegetable marrow intervened, and we shall never know the rest.

In a book, “The Early Letters of Jane Welsh Carlyle,” edited by D. G. Ritchie, we have a brief parallel. Some of us take leave to dislike Mrs. Carlyle and to be very sorry for her husband. When the lady was about nineteen she wrote to a confidential friend: “No lover will Jane Welsh ever find like St. Preux, no husband like Wolmar (I don’t mean to insinuate that *I should like both*); and to no man will she ever give her heart and pretty hand who bears these no resemblance. George Rennie! James Aitken! Robert MacTurk! James Baird!!! Robby Angus! . . . Where is the Wolmar? Bess, I am in earnest—I shall never marry.” But it may be doubted whether Mrs. Carlyle passed quite unhurt through the fires. There was Edward Irving.

Very sacred and beautiful is the true dawn of love in a maiden’s soul, and few descriptions of it are more delicate than that of Sydney Dobell’s in his poem on “The Coming of Love”:

“When we all lie still
Where churchyard pines their funeral vigil keep,
Thou shalt rise up early
While the dews are deep;
Thee the earliest bird shall rouse
From thy maiden sleep,
Thy white bed in the old house

Where we all, in our day,
Lived and loved so cheerly.
And thou shalt take thy way
Where the nodding daffodil
Tells thee he is near ;
Where the lark above the corn
Sings him to thine ear ;
Where thine own oak, fondly grim,
Points to more than thou can'st spy ;
And the beckoning beechen spray
Beckons, beckons thee to him,
Thee to him, and him to thee ;
Him to thee, who, coy and slow,
Stealest through dim paths untrod
Step by step, with doubtful glance,
Taking witness, quick and shy,
Of each bud and herb and tree
If thou doest well or no.
Haste thee, haste thee, slow and coy !
What ! art doubting still, though even
The white tree that shakes with fear
When no other dreams of ill ;
The girl-tree whom best thou knowest,
Waves the garlands of her joy,
And, by something more than chance,
Of all the paths in one path only
The primroses where thou goest
Thicken to thy feet, as though
Thou already wert in heaven,
And walking in the galaxy."

II

But I am thinking of the love of a lifetime, of
the meeting between two who look the look that

is at once an avowal and a covenant. This is what happens :

“Soft, grey buds on the willow,
Warm, moist winds from the bay,
Sea-gulls out on the sandy beach,
And a road my eager feet would reach,
That leads to the Far-away.

“Dust on the wayside flower,
The meadow-lark’s luring tone
Is silent now, from the grasses tipped
With dew at the dawn, the pearls have slipped—
Far have I fared alone.

“And then, by the alder thicket
The turn of the road—and you!
Though the earth lie white in the noonday heat,
Or the swift storm follow our hurrying feet,
What do we care—we two !”

It is on this mystic mating that the real happiness of life depends, and nothing else is to be named in comparison. Alaric Watts (1797–1864), a journalist of last century, who had no money, thought himself justified in marrying a charming Quakeress, with whom he had been smitten at first sight. He was twenty-four, and, according to his friend, Miss Jewsbury, “had the rashest temper and kindest heart of any man she ever knew.” He had no notion of economy, was rarely out of debt, and ultimately became bankrupt. Yet in her old age and widowhood Mrs. Watts was able to say, with an expression of rapture on her face, “My life has not

been a prosperous one—far from it—but it has been a banquet of love.”

The true love-stories, or rather the stories of true love, are all the same, and do not need to be repeated. Let me take two almost at random, both from the biographies of actors. Macready (1793–1873) long before his marriage was a famous man; and when his engagement to Miss Catherine Atkins, who was a very young provincial actress of no note, was announced, it was not very welcome to his friends. There is an amusing account of how he introduced his sweetheart to his sister, and of the sister's evident surprise and disappointment. Catherine was chagrined, and the sister prostrated for the rest of the day. But Macready's own feeling for Catherine was always tender and poetical, from the morning when he saw her walking on the stage at Dundee, waiting for a rehearsal not yet begun. She was to play Virginia to his *Virginius*, in the tragedy by Sheridan Knowles. He writes himself:

“She was distinguished for a peculiar expression of intelligence and sprightly gentleness. She rehearsed with great propriety the part of the Prince of Wales, and was introduced to me by the manager as my Virginia for the next night's play. On the following morning she came an hour before the regular summons to go through the scenes of Virginia and receive my instructions. She was dressed in a closely-fitting tartan frock, which

showed off to advantage the perfect symmetry of her figure. . . . She might have been Virginia."

This last sentence slips out quite unconsciously and almost accidentally. "She might have been Virginia." The matter was settled.

Still more beautiful is the brief romance of Charles Mayne Young, the tragedian (1777-1856). He was married at St. Anne's Church, Liverpool, on March 9, 1805, to Miss Julia Ann Grimani, a descendant of the famous Venetian family of that name. She died at the age of twenty-one on July 17, 1806, after giving birth to a son, Julian Charles, who became a clergyman, and wrote his father's life. Young lived fifty years longer, passing a blameless life and much respected by all, but he never married again; and before the end came, and as it came, his memory constantly reverted to the old love, from which no blandishment of woman had ever drawn him away. His son tells us how, in moments of family intercourse, "he loved to revert to her beauty, her tenderness to him, her devotion to her parents." At such times he would take from the recesses of a secret drawer her miniature, and, as he gazed upon it till the tears ran down his furrowed cheeks, he would deplore its unworthy presentment of her sweet face, and then he would produce, from a cherished morocco-case, a long tress of chestnut hair cut from her luxuriant locks. Mr. Julian Young adds that the affection seemed to grow stronger as the supreme hour drew

nearer. The dying husband dreamed of heaven only in connection with her who for a brief space had created a heaven on earth around them both. "Thank God ! I shall soon see my Julia," were almost the last words that fell from his lips.

III

This period, the fifth lustrum of life, is the time when great things start. It is the time when men feel a buoyant sense of mental vigour and delight in the exercise of intellectual weapons. Browning (1812-1889) published "*Paracelsus*" in 1835. It has been well said : "A poem so full of the life-blood of humanity would have been a wonderful phenomenon had the writer been a man in the very prime of a poet's strength, when the soul has been ripened by much joy and pain, schooled by a thousand hopes and the thousand disappointments that come of a thousand hopes ; but what other English writer at the age of twenty-four ever concentrated in a poem so much life, intellectual and emotional, as did Mr. Browning in "*Paracelsus*" ?

Again, the critical faculty often takes years to mature, but Charles Lamb (1775-1834) at twenty-one was among the very first to detect the real significance of Coleridge and Wordsworth.

FROM TWENTY TO TWENTY-FIVE

Age 21

SEBASTIAN CABOT was probably twenty-one when he sailed in 1499 on his expedition and discovered eighteen hundred miles of sea-coast of the North American continent. His crew mutinied, and he had to return.

Martin Luther in 1505 became a monk and entered the Augustinian monastery in Erfurt.

Melanchthon became professor of Greek at Wittenberg University in 1518, a position he held for forty-two years, until his death.

William Cobbett (1762-1835) was twenty-one when he quitted his home, and, without communicating his design to any one, started for London. He became an under-clerk to an attorney, but this kind of life did not suit him. He did not think of returning home, however, but on the contrary, rushing from one bold step to another still more so, he enlisted as a private soldier in a regiment intended to serve in Nova Scotia.

William Pitt made his maiden speech on February 26, 1781, on Burke's motion for the economical reform of the civil list.

Henry Kirke White died in 1806.

Sir David Wilkie first exhibited in the Academy in 1806.

Sir Robert Peel (1788-1850) entered Parliament in 1809, his father having bought a seat for him at Cashel.

Shelley published "Queen Mab" in 1813.

Browning published "Pauline" in 1833.

Oliver Cromwell married in 1620.

George Romney, the painter, married Mary Abbot, of Kirkland, a young woman who had nursed him through an illness. Shortly

after he imagined that he had taken a very imprudent step, and set out in 1762 for London, leaving his wife and two children behind. She was never invited to join him, and during thirty-two years he visited her only twice; but in 1798, when he required a nurse, he returned to his wife, who tenderly ministered to him in his weakness.

Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751-1816) married the beautiful singer Miss Linley in 1773.

Mrs. Gaskell, born Elizabeth Cleghorn Stevenson, married in 1832 the Rev. William Gaskell, a Unitarian minister.

Age 22

Alfred the Great (849-901) succeeded his brother as King of the West Saxons, after having already distinguished himself against the Danes.

Canute became King of England in 1016, and married Emma, widow of Aethelred.

St. Bernard of Clairvaux, at the age of twenty-two, with thirty companions, in 1113 entered the monastery of Cîteaux, where he became famous for the strictness with which he observed a very strict rule.

Kepler, after years of family trouble, brought on by the misconduct of his mother and the poverty of his father, became professor of mathematics at Gratz in 1593.

Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727) in 1664 discovered the method of infinite series, and probably in this year or the next began to speculate on the subject of gravity.

William Congreve in 1693 produced *The Old Bachelor*.

Mark Akenside (1721-1770) published in 1744 his "Pleasures of Imagination."

George Washington (1732-1799) fought his first action, aided by a party of Indians, against the French. He was in the hottest fire, but was forced to surrender.

On May 16, 1761, Boswell was introduced to Dr. Johnson in the shop of Mr. Davies, a bookseller, of 8, Russell Street, Covent Garden. Much came of that.

At this age Lavoisier (1743-1794) competed for the prize for the best essay on lighting the streets of Paris. Finding in the course of his experiments that his eyes were not sufficiently sensitive to detect the difference between the power of the

different flames, he shut himself up in a dark room for six weeks, when his sight became so sensitive that he was able to perceive the smallest distinctions. He gained the medal.

Thomas Campbell, the poet, of whom perhaps more was written by his contemporaries than about any other poet, published in 1799 "The Pleasures of Hope," which was instantly popular alike for matter and for style.

E. B. Pusey (1800-1882) was twenty-two when at Oxford he was "obliged to read an infidel book to help a friend who was in difficulty. This was my first real experience of the deadly breath of infidel thought upon my soul. I never forgot how utterly I shrank from it."

Disraeli published his first novel, "Vivian Grey," in 1826.

Charles Darwin sailed in 1831 on the famous *Beagle* voyage.

Ernest Renan was twenty-two when on October 6, 1845, he quitted Saint Sulpice, leaving behind him the faith which he had once hoped to teach.

Alexander Smith's poem, "A Life Drama," was published in 1852, and had an immediate and startling success.

Among those who married at this age were Mary Queen of Scots, who married Darnley in 1565, and John Wilkes, his wife being an heiress of the name of Mead, ten years his senior. Almost from the beginning the household was divided and miserable.

Age 23

Alexander the Great defeated Darius at Issus, 333 B.C. "I am now master of Asia," he wrote somewhat later to Darius; "if you will not own me as such, I shall treat you as an evil doer. If you wish to debate the point, do so like a man on the battlefield. I shall take care to find you wherever you may be."

Savonarola entered the Dominican Monastery of Bologna in 1475.

Erasmus (1466-1536) left the Augustinian monastery of Sion, near Delft, to become private secretary to the Bishop of Cambray.

Spinoza, in 1656, was excommunicated by the synagogue of Amsterdam, after the Rabbis had vainly tried bribery and assassination.

Pope published his "Essay on Criticism" in 1711.

Sheridan produced *The Rivals* in 1775, which failed the first night, but quickly achieved a triumphant success.

Samuel Rogers published his first volume of poems in 1786, "An Ode to Superstition," with other poems. About twenty copies were sold at the end of four years.

Napoleon at twenty-three was a rebel in Corsica and a deserter in France, and thus the second revolution was a fortunate event for him, as the new Government could not dispense with the few trained officers left.

Wordsworth published in 1793 his first book, "An Evening Walk," in which there are faint traces of his genius.

John Keats published "Endymion" in 1818.

H. E. Manning (1808-1892), afterwards Cardinal, obtained at this age a clerkship in the Colonial Office, and while in London he met Miss Bevan (1802-1878), afterwards Mrs. Mortimer, authoress of "Peep of Day," and she first directed his thought to the religious life.

Among others who married at this age were Pestalozzi, Mirabeau, Ann Radcliffe, Sir Henry Bishop, S. T. Coleridge in 1795, Richard Arkwright, and Melancthon.

Age 24

At twenty-four Dante (1265-1321) fought at the battle of Campaldino (1289), when the Florentine Guelphs inflicted a crushing defeat on the Ghibellines of Arezzo. Dante says, in a letter now lost, "I had much fear, and in the end very great joy, through the varying chances of that battle." It is recorded by one of his early biographers, Lionardo Bruni, that he fought vigorously in the foremost rank.

Beatrice Portinari died in 1290, at the age of twenty-four.

At the age of twenty-four Melancthon (1497-1560) published his "Loci Communes" (1521), a work which Luther, to the end of his life, recommended as next to the canon of Scripture. All Reformation experts recognise the value of this noble work, especially in its earliest editions, which are full of youthful enthusiasm.

Cervantes (1547-1616) volunteered as a private soldier against

the Turks and lost his left hand at the battle of Lepanto in 1571.

At this age most probably Milton (1608-1674) wrote "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso."

Richard Baxter began his ministry at Kidderminster in 1640.

William Penn wrote his famous tract called "The Sandy Foundation Shaken," for which he was committed to the Tower, in 1668. While there he wrote "No Cross, No Crown."

Isaac Watts preached his first sermon on his twenty-fourth birthday, July 17, 1698.

Voltaire's first tragedy, *Œdipe*, was performed in 1718, and achieved a triumphant success.

Linnæus in 1731 was appointed to travel in Lapland under royal authority, and at the expense of the University of Upsala. This gave him an opportunity for extended observation, and was an important turning-point in his life.

George Whitefield (1714-1770) preached his first open-air sermon. At Bristol he was forbidden the churches, and took his stand upon rising ground within range of the Kingswood collieries, his first field-pulpit.

Werner (1750-1817), the founder of the science of mineralogy, published from the obscurity of a mine at Freyberg, where he acted as officer, an epoch-making volume called "A Treatise on the Eternal Characters of Minerals."

In 1783, after the defeat of the Coalition Ministry on Fox's India Bill, Pitt became Prime Minister at the age of twenty-four.

George Canning made his maiden speech in Parliament on January 31, 1794, and it was more or less a failure.

Lord Byron published in March 1812 the first two cantos of "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage." He awoke one morning and found himself famous.

Thomas Carlyle in 1819 began to suffer from the dyspepsia which tormented him through life. The three most miserable years of his life followed, years of mental agony, religious crisis, and pecuniary struggle.

T. B. Macaulay, a few months after his election to a fellowship at Trinity, published his first article—that on Milton—in the *Edinburgh Review* for August 1825.

Harriet Martineau was virtually engaged in 1826, when her betrothed became suddenly insane, and, after months of illness

of body and mind, died. She said : " I am in truth very thankful for not having married at all."

John Ruskin published the first volume of " Modern Painters " in 1843.

William Morris published " The Defence of Guinevere " in 1858.

Among those married at twenty-four were Ebenezer Erskine, William Carey, H. F. Cary (the translator of Dante), Bulwer Lytton, and Charles Dickens, who " married the wrong sister."

Age 25

The crisis of St. Francis of Assisi's life came with a severe illness at the age of twenty-five. He resolved to devote himself entirely to poverty and the religious life.

Anne Askew was burned as a heretic in 1546.

John Lyly published his " Euphues, or the Anatomy of Wit," in 1579.

Ben Jonson published in 1599 *Every Man in his Humour*, his first independent work. In the same year he was in prison, and in danger of the gallows, for having killed Gabriel Spenser in a duel. In the prison he met a Roman Catholic priest, and the result was his conversion to Rome, to which he adhered for twelve years.

Jacob Böhme (born 1575) had a " revelation of the essences, properties, and uses of the grass and herbs of the field, etc."

Descartes, after nearly five years' experience of military life, returned to France in 1621 and renounced the profession of arms.

Rembrandt painted " The Anatomist " in 1632.

George Berkeley in 1710 published his " Treatise concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge."

The " Odes " of William Collins were published in 1746.

When Edward Gibbon was twenty-five, in 1792, he reviewed his own character and position : " The shining qualities of my understanding are extensiveness and penetration ; but I want both quickness and exactness. As to my situation in life, though I may sometimes repine at it, it is perhaps the best adapted to my character. I can command all the conveniences of life, and I can command, too, that independence (that first earthly bless-

ing) which is hardly to be met with in a higher or lower fortune."

Charlotte Corday murdered Marat in his bath in 1793, and was executed four days afterwards. Her demeanour is said to have been so self-possessed and noble as almost to remove her from the class of criminals.

In the autumn of 1795 Wordsworth decided to set up house-keeping with his sister Dorothy, and have no profession but poetry. In 1805 he wrote to Sir George Beaumont: "Upon the interest of the £900, and £100 more which the 'Lyrical Ballads' have brought me, my sister and I contrived to live seven years, nearly eight." Poor Dorothy, even nature failed to please her when William was away!

"Only, my Love's away!
I'd as lief that the blue were grey."

In 1797 Coleridge wrote "The Ancient Mariner," "Geneviève," and "Christabel."

At twenty-five Palmerston was offered the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, but on consulting his friends he declined the honour and accepted an appointment to the War Office instead. He thus "declined the brilliant offer to accept the safe one."

John Keats died at twenty-five. "On February 3, 1820, the first open sign of disease showed itself. Keats returned home late at night, severely chilled by a winter's drive without a coat on the outside of a stage coach; and at Brown's suggestion at once went to bed." "I entered his chamber as he leapt into bed. On entering the cold sheets, before his head was on the pillow, he slightly coughed, and I heard him say, 'That is blood from my mouth.' I went towards him: he was examining a single drop of blood upon the sheet. 'Bring me the candle, Brown, and let me see this blood.' After regarding it steadfastly he looked up into my face, with a calmness of countenance I can never forget, and said: 'I know the colour of this blood—it is arterial blood—I cannot be deceived in that colour; that drop of blood is my death-warrant; I must die.'" In 1820 he went abroad, and at first the sea air seemed to soothe him, and he wrote, "Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art." On February 23, 1821, he died in Rome, and Severn thus de-

scribes the scene : " He is gone : he died with the most perfect ease—he seemed to go to sleep. On the twenty-third, at about four, the approaches of death came on. ' Severn—I—lift me up—I am dying—I shall die easy ; don't be frightened—be firm, and thank God it has come.' I lifted him up in my arms. The phlegm seemed boiling in his throat, and increased until eleven, when he gradually sank into death so quietly that I still thought he slept."

Abraham Lincoln was elected a member of the State Legislature in 1834, and thus entered on his political career.

Henry Fawcett, afterwards Professor of Political Economy at Cambridge, was accidentally blinded by some pellets from his father's gun in 1858.

Edward Whymper made the first ascent of the Matterhorn in 1865.

Among those who married at twenty-five were Charles I., Thomas Fairfax, William Blake, and Thomas Arnold of Rugby.

J. G. Lockhart in 1820 married Sir Walter Scott's eldest daughter Sophia.

H. E. Manning, afterwards Cardinal, married Miss Caroline Sargent in 1833. In 1837 his young and beautiful bride died, leaving no children.

" There is never a daughter of Eve but once, ere the tale of
her day is done,
She will know the scent of the Eden rose, just once beneath
the sun !
And whatever else she may win or lose, endure, or do, or
dare,
She will never forget the enchantment it gave to the common
air ;
For the world may give her content, or joy, fame, sorrow, or
sacrifice,
But the hour that brought the scent of the rose, she lived it
in Paradise.



IX

“THAT FATEFUL SIXTH LUSTRUM”: FROM TWENTY-FIVE TO THIRTY

WE come now to the lustrum between eleven and twelve of the clock ; the lustrum where the noon of life may be said to be attained ; the period between twenty-five and thirty. This means for almost every man the first home, the first start in practical life. Many, indeed, have set out earlier. There are multitudes who have begun to earn their own living at fourteen, and in not a few sad cases much sooner than that. But by the time a man is twenty-five, or at any rate in the years between twenty-five and thirty, there is commonly a new seriousness and responsibility in life—a house, marriage it may be, and children, the true commencement of the independent career. Also, according to certain psychologists, this is the lustrum in which

the character gets a set. Professor James says : "Already at the age of twenty-five you see the professional mannerism settling down on the young commercial traveller, on the young doctor, on the young minister, on the young counsellor at law. You see the little lines of cleavage running through the character, the tricks of thought, the prejudices, the ways of the shop, in a word, from which the man can by-and-by no more escape than his coat-sleeve can suddenly fall into a new set of folds."

I

Carlyle, in his essay on Scott, recognises with unerring insight the importance of this period, and the fact that it is especially critical to those who thus early have given promise or even attained a reputation. A young man shows signs of distinguished ability. He gives pledges by college reputation and even by first essays in public life. Some speech of his attracts attention, or he writes a book which excites a lively interest in his future. He is tempted to think that his future is already assured. As Carlyle says : "What a strange Nemesis lurks in the felicities of men ! In thy mouth it shall be as sweet as honey, in thy belly it shall be bitter as gall ! Some weakly-organised individual, we will say at the age of five-and-twenty, whose main or whole talent rests on some prurient susceptibility, and nothing under it but shallowness and vacuum, is clutched

hold of by the general imagination, is whirled aloft to the giddy height : and taught to believe the divine-seeming message that he is a great man : such individual seems the luckiest of men : and, alas, is he not the unluckiest ? Swallow not the Circe-draught, O weakly-organised individual ; it is fell poison ; it will dry up the fountains of thy whole existence, and all will grow withered and parched ; thou shalt be wretched under the sun ! Is there, for example, a sadder book than that ‘ Life of Byron ’ by Moore ? ”

In our country a father thinks that he has done all that can reasonably be expected of him when he has fitted his son for a trade or a profession. But, as has been said, the French parents recognise that the real tug-of-war comes in the first years of practical contact with the world, and do everything within their power to serve as buffers for him against the hard knocks of these critical years. Thus, the Frenchman literally remains papa’s boy (*le fils à papa*), and the Frenchwoman mamma’s girl (*la fille à maman*), so long as the father and mother live.

II

In his book on “ The Intellectual Life,” Mr. P. G. Hamerton, in a letter “ To a young man of brilliant ability who had just taken his degree,” draws a domestic picture :


“ It is always a great pleasure to me to pass

an evening at your father's house ; but on the last occasion that pleasure was very much enhanced because you were once more with us. I watched your mother's eyes as she sat in her place in the drawing-room. They followed you almost without ceasing, and there was the sweetest, happiest expression on her dear face that betrayed her tender maternal love for you and her legitimate maternal pride. Your father was equally happy in his own way : he was much more gay and talkative than I have seen him for two or three anxious years ; he told amusing stories ; he entered playfully into the jests of others ; he had projects for the future, and spoke of them with facetious exaggeration. I sat quietly in my corner, slyly observing my old friends, and amusing myself by discovering (it did not need much perspicacity for that) the hidden sources of the happiness that was so clearly visible. They were gladdened by the first successes of your manhood ; by the evidence of your strength ; by the realisation of hopes long cherished."

This is indeed a golden hour for parents, when their hopes for their children seem to be set on a sure foundation, and the imagination revels in the prospect of victories to come.



III



But it turns out too often that the promising young man is foredoomed to disappoint himself and to disappoint others. Allowance must be made for an occasional arrest of intellectual development. In the fuller life of manhood, as in early years, precocity is sometimes followed by mediocrity. We must allow also for the slowing of progress by feeble health. But the failures are mainly due to a want of persistence. There are those who can make a short, strenuous effort, but are incapable, apparently, of long and sustained exertion. With some the first step of recognition acts as a narcotic and paralyses the organs of action. There must be strong and genuine devotion and high conscientiousness for the accomplishment of eager hopes. Those who have developed slowly, who have done little at school or college, who have neglected prescribed tasks, may retrieve whatever has been lost if they set themselves whole-heartedly to the weighty labours of life. Dr. Osler is emphatic on that point, and what is true of the medical profession is equally true of others. I cannot do better than quote him.

“Five years, at least, of trial await the man after parting from his teachers and entering upon an independent course—years upon which his future depends, and from which his horoscope may be cast with certainty. It is all the same whether he

settles in a country village or goes on with hospital and laboratory work; whether he takes a prolonged trip abroad or whether he settles down in practice with a father or friend—these five waiting years fix his fate, so far as the student life is concerned. Without any strong natural propensity to study, he may feel such a relief after graduation that the effort to take to books is beyond his mental strength; and a weekly journal, with an occasional text-book, furnish pabulum enough at least to keep his mind hibernating. But ten years later he is dead mentally, past any possible hope of galvanising into life as a student, fit to do a routine practice, often a capable, resourceful man, but without any deep convictions, and probably more interested in stocks or in horses than in diagnosis or therapeutics. But this is not always the fate of the student who finishes his work on Commencement Day. There are men full of zeal in practice, who give good service to their fellow-creatures, who have not the capacity or the energy to keep up with the times. While they have lost interest in science, they are loyal members of the profession, and appreciate their responsibilities as such. That fateful first lustrum ruins some of our most likely material. Nothing is more trying to the soldier than inaction, to mark time while the battle is raging all about him; and waiting for practice is a serious strain under which many yield. In the cities it is not so hard to keep up: there is

work in the dispensaries and colleges, and the stimulus of the medical colleges ; but in smaller towns and in the country it takes a strong man to live through the years of waiting without some deterioration."

That fateful first lustrum ! A young man finds himself in a position which he considers much beneath his powers. If he has distinguished himself in earlier stages he discovers, with disappointment, that very few are aware of his success, and that those who know are watchful. He is tempted to think that anything will do. The words "This will do" have probably done more harm than any others. So in many cases a process of deterioration sets in, and the highest visions fade. Nothing is more noticeable in the great books on conduct than the universal conviction of wise men that the practice of reading is most difficult to keep up. At all events comparatively few remain students or investigators to the last. Any one who has kept his eyes open has seen the creeping of mental paralysis, the contentment with a low standard of work, the limitation of interests to the narrowest circle, and the ruin which every one perceives before the subject is aware of it.

Sometimes the failure takes another form. There is an effort, by dogmatism or by eccentricity, to break in on the solid indifference of the world. In lieu of the gold of fame, the German silver of notoriety

is sought. The rashnesses of youth are often a sign of promise, and are not judged too harshly by the experienced. But the saddest of fates is for a good man to become a Cheap Jack. There may be an apparent triumph at the beginning, but the man is irrevocably lost, and the time comes when he is compelled to recognise it.

No, there is but one way : that is the way of daily conscientious labour. The one object should be the faithful performance of the task, with a constant desire to learn. John Locke said that the main point of education is to get a relish of "knowledge." If this is so, much of our education seems to be inefficient. Those who have a relish of knowledge will go on to-day, satisfied to let the day's work absorb their thoughts. There is no way but "to follow the great wheel uphill." Whoever does that is sure of his own at last. Carlyle says of Scott : "Seemingly without much effort, but taught by Nature, and the instinct which instructs the sound heart what is good for it and what is not, he felt that he could always do without this same emblazonry of reputation ; that he ought to put no trust in it ; but be ready at any time to see it pass away from him and to hold on his way as before. It is incalculable, as we conjecture, what evil he escaped in this manner : what perversions, irritations, mean agonies without a name he lived wholly apart from, knew nothing of."

IV

One of the most wonderful of all literary achievements was the publication of the "Pickwick Papers," published in 1837. Dickens had begun them early in 1836, in which year his "Sketches by Boz" were collected and published. The first of the Boz sketches appeared in December, 1833, when the author was twenty-one. As has been well said: "He kept himself and his life apart from and above the temptations which the great world is only too eager to offer to every one who is new and brilliant and amusing. When 'Pickwick' came out that great wit Sydney Smith said, in my hearing: 'Three hundred soup tickets!' But from the first, as to the last, Dickens was not to be cajoled by the person of quality who desired to make an exhibition of possibly the most original English writer of domestic fiction the world has ever seen."

It was at twenty-six that Carlyle passed through the severe experience which he called his conversion, or new-birth. He has described it in "Sartor Resartus":

"Thus had the Everlasting No (*das ewige Nein*) pealed authoritatively through all the recesses of my being, of my ME; and then was it that my whole Me stood up, in native God-created majesty, and with emphasis recorded its Protest. Such a Protest, the most important transaction in Life, may that same Indignation and Defiance, in a

psychological point of view, be fitly called. The Everlasting No had said: 'Behold thou art fatherless, outcast, and the Universe is mine' (the Devil's); to which my whole Me now made answer: '*I am not thine, but Free, and forever hate thee!*' It is from this hour that I incline to date my Spiritual New-birth, or Baphometic Fire-baptism; perhaps I directly thereupon began to be a man."

Napoleon I. was appointed to the command of the Army of Italy at twenty-six, and his great European career began.

At the same age Cuvier, after much private study and research, got his chance, by being appointed colleague to M. Mertreiu in the newly-created Chair of Comparative Anatomy in Paris. At this age Joseph Black presented his graduation thesis to the Faculty of Medicine of Edinburgh University, and laid the foundation of quantitative analysis.

At twenty-seven John Bunyan began to preach in Bedford. Leibnitz at the same age discovered the differential calculus.

Sophocles, at the age of twenty-eight, competed for the prize of tragedy against Æschylus, his elder by just thirty years.

At twenty-eight Carlyle wrote in his diary: "Dec. 31. The year is closing. This time eight-and-twenty years I was a child of three weeks old, sleeping in my mother's bosom."

“Oh ! little did my mother think,
That day she cradled me,
The lands that I should travel in,
The death that I should dee.”

Wordsworth was twenty-eight when the “*Lyrical Ballads* ” was published in 1798. Was he not the link between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries ? At twenty-eight Emerson broke off his connection with the Second Unitarian Church of Boston, “because he found himself unable to administer the Communion in the usual form.”

Albert, Prince Consort, writes to Stockmar : “I write to you on this my thirtieth birthday—an important period in a man’s life ; and as I do so I remember with gratitude all the good lessons and practical maxims I have received from you, and all the valuable aids you have given me towards the establishment of my political position. I can say I am content with everything, and would now only desire more energy and perseverance to work as much good as circumstances will allow.”

Ignatius Loyola was thirty when, in the siege of Pampeluna, his leg was shattered by a ball. During his illness he read books of romance and piety, and resolved to devote himself to the service of the Blessed Virgin. This was the great resolve of his life. At thirty Charlemagne commenced the great mission of his life—the conquest and conversion of the Saxons. This he accomplished after a war which lasted for three decades. Thackeray

was thirty when he published his "Paris Sketch Book."

V

Madame de Sévigné, at the age of thirty, had already begun to look back upon her youth as a thing of the past. She thus writes in answer to some verses composed in her praise :

"Your verses have reminded me of my youth, and I am curious to know why the remembrance of the loss of so irrecoverable a gift causes no sadness. Instead of the pleasures I experience, it appears to me I ought to have cried ; but, without examining whence comes this feeling, I will think only of my gratitude to you."

It was Balzac who crowned the woman of thirty years, who called *ce bel âge de trente ans* "the poetic summit of the life of women." From that point they can survey the whole journey and look as far into the past as into the future. The Marquise d'Aiglemont, the heroine of "La Femme de Trente Ans," was still beautiful. Her greatest charm lay in that calm expression of face which spoke of an amazing depth of soul. "A woman of thirty," says Balzac, "has irresistible attractions for a young man ; nothing is more natural, nothing more strongly woven, more firmly based than those deep attachments of which we see so many examples in the world between a woman like the marchioness and a young man like Vandenesse."

VI

Montaigne writes : " Of all the great human actions I ever heard of, of what sort soever, I have observed, both in former ages and our own, more performed before the age of thirty than after. . . . As to my own particular, I do certainly believe that, since that age, both my understanding and my constitution have rather decayed than improved, and retired rather than advanced. 'Tis possible that, with those who make the best use of their time, knowledge and experience may grow up and increase with their years ; but the vivacity, quickness, and steadiness, and other pieces of us of much greater importance and much more essentially our own, languish and decay."

Charles Lamb wrote in his " New Year's Eve " : " Not childhood alone, but the young man, until he is thirty, never feels practically that he is mortal. He knows it, indeed, and if need be he could preach a homily on the fragility of life ; but he brings it not home to himself any more than in a hot June we can appropriate to our imagination the freezing days of December."

FROM TWENTY-FIVE TO THIRTY

Age 26

WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR married Matilda, daughter of Baldwin, Earl of Flanders, in 1053.

Catharine of Aragon, in 1509, married Henry VIII., who was then only eighteen years old.

Charles V. of Germany married Isabella of Portugal, to whom he was devotedly attached.

Kepler, the astronomer, married a widow.

Edmund Waller, in 1631, married his first wife, "a rich heiress in the city."

In 1735 Samuel Johnson married at twenty-six a widow of forty-six, and no woman ever received a deeper or more lasting devotion.

Tobias Smollett married, in 1747, Miss Anne Lascelles, a beautiful creole heiress of Jamaica.

John Howard, the prison reformer, having been nursed through an acute illness by an attentive landlady some fifty-three years of age, felt he could offer no adequate return short of marriage for her motherly kindness, and they were united in 1752.

Napoleon I. was married to Josephine Beauharnais on March 9, 1796.

Walter Scott married Miss Charlotte Carpenter in 1797.

Among others who married at this age were Jeremy Taylor, Lord Melbourne, Christopher North.

John Calvin sent out into the world in 1536 his "Institutes of the Christian Religion." It was essentially in the same shape as that in which it continued till the end of his life, through all

the editions he superintended. "Calvin's 'Institutes' contain sections that may be put beside the finest which Pascal and Bossuet wrote. Passages like those on the sublimity of Holy Scripture, the misery of fallen man, the importance of prayer, can never fail to make a deep impression on the reader. Even Roman Catholic opponents have admitted these excellences, and used many sections of the work accordingly. Hence it is perfectly intelligible when he himself looks upon his work with a feeling of satisfaction and pride, gladly referring in his other writings to the 'Institutes.'"

Fanny Burney, afterwards Madame d'Arblay, issued her first novel, "Evelina."

Bishop Butler preached his famous sermons between the age of twenty-six and thirty-three.

Sheridan was twenty-six when the *School for Scandal* was produced at Drury Lane.

At twenty-six we find Richard Wagner conductor of a German theatre at Riga, married to an actress, straitened in circumstances, and unhappy to the verge of despair.

Strauss (1808-1874) published in 1834 the first volume and in 1835 the second volume of his "Leben Jesu."

Age 27

Lucan, a young noble at the court of Nero, wrote his "Pharsalia," perhaps the greatest continuous poem ever written at such an age.

Tobias Smollett, born 1721, published "Roderick Random" when he was twenty-seven, and "Peregrine Pickle" when he was thirty.

Edmund Burke's father, being angry at his rejection of the profession of law, withdrew, in 1756, the £100 he had allowed him, and thus Burke, who married in the same year Miss Nugent, of Bath, was forced to depend on literature for a living. In 1756 Burke published his "Vindication of Natural Society."

George Crabbe had come up to London and found himself, in 1781, in danger of a debtors' prison. In this strait he wrote to Burke, who, though a complete stranger, generously came to the rescue and saved him.

Robert Burns was twenty-seven when, in July 1786, he sent out from Kilmarnock his first volume of poems into the world.

When he was twenty-seven Von Moltke wrote gaily to one of his sisters: "My health is wonderful. I often lie unconscious for eight or ten hours—at night; I have no appetite after meals; towards evening such convulsive yawning and stretching, and all day utter sleeplessness and restlessness in all my body. I only hope you do not suffer so."

On November 13, 1846, John Couch Adams laid before the Royal Astronomical Society the long-suppressed investigation in which he had determined, from the irregularities of Uranus, the orbit and place of Neptune.

Matthew Arnold published "The Strayed Reveller" and other poems in 1849, his first volume of verse.

Robert Louis Stevenson published his first book, "The Inland Voyage."

Sir Thomas More married Jane Cotte in 1505. "And albeit," writes his biographer Roper, "his mind most served him to the second daughter, for that he thought her the fairest and best favoured, yet when he considered that it would be both great grief and some shame for the eldest to see her younger sister preferred before her in marriage, he then, of a certain pity, framed his fancy towards the eldest. There never was a happier union. They lived in uninterrupted harmony and affection."

John Donne, about Christmas, 1600, was secretly married to a bride of sixteen years of age. This cost him his post of secretary to Sir Thomas Egerton, the Lord Keeper.

Rembrandt, in 1634, married Saskia van Ulenburgh, and the eight years following this marriage were the happiest of his life. Saskia died in 1642.

George Washington, in 1759, married Mrs. Martha Custis, a rich young widow his own age, who brought him a fortune of more than a hundred thousand dollars.

Le Sage married the daughter of a citizen of Paris, "whose face was her only fortune, but with whom he enjoyed for many years complete domestic happiness."

Lord Byron's mysterious marriage to Miss Milbanke at Seaham, Durham, took place on January 2, 1815. In January, 1816, Lady Byron left her husband's house for ever.

Among others who were married at this age were John

Flaxman, the sculptor, Daniel O'Connell, Sarah Austin, James Watt, and Benjamin West.

Age 28

At twenty-eight Cervantes, getting letters of recommendation from Don John and others, sailed with his brothers to Spain, and on the way was captured by pirates and carried to Algiers, where he was sold as a slave and for five years endured the very extremity of evil fortune.¹

Alexander Wilson, the ornithologist, landed in America on July 14, 1794, "almost as poor as he began his mortal existence." He soon found his true vocation.

Mungo Park published in 1799 "Travels in the Interior of Africa." In this book he suppressed many incidents of his journey, for fear they would not be believed, and so bring discredit on his book.

Charles Kingsley published "The Saints' Tragedy" in 1847.

George Ticknor was appointed Professor of French and Spanish Literature at Harvard. This was the turning-point of his life, as he visited Spain to qualify himself, and so received his master impulse.

When Mohammed was twenty-eight he married a rich widow, Chadidscha, who was fifteen years his senior. He mourned her loss with sincere grief after twenty-four years of marriage.

Laurence Sterne married Elizabeth Lumley in 1741, after a month's courtship.

Haydn, in 1760, married the daughter of a poor musician, and was just raised above indigence by being appointed *Maestro di capella* in second to Prince Esterhazy.

Among others who married at this age were Lord Clive, Lord John Churchill, first Duke of Marlborough.

In 1801 Novalis died at the age of twenty-eight. His wedding day was fixed, his future dwelling-place taken, and he was in high spirits. He was attacked by consumption, but to the last he seemed to be bright, eager, and full of life. On the morning of his death he asked his brother to play to him, and fell asleep amid the melodious sounds. He never woke again in this world. "Free and happy, like a bird of passage," he had taken his flight.

Age 29

The year 878 was the most eventful in the career of King Alfred. At mid-winter, without any warning, the Danes came pouring into Wessex from the north, seized Chippenham, and, making it a centre of their operations, quickly overran the country. Alfred retired to the marshes of Somerset, and his fortune sank to the lowest ebb. If he had left his countrymen at this time probably the name of England and Englishmen would have disappeared from history ; but his misfortune roused him, and he defeated the Danes in the great battle of Edington and established himself in comparative tranquillity.

Dante wrote his "*Vita Nuova*" in 1249.

Christopher Marlowe was killed in a tavern brawl in 1593.

Shakespeare published his "*Venus and Adonis*" in 1593.

Robert Barclay, in 1678, published his famous "*Apology*," which became the standard exposition of the principles of the Quakers.

William Drummond, of Hawthornden, married in 1614, and his wife died within the year.

James Boswell had been courting in Ireland, but the lady repulsed him, and he sought comfort in complaining to his cousin, Margaret Montgomerie. She offered her sympathy, and Boswell in gratitude tendered his hand, and they were married in 1769.

Robert Burns married Jean Armour, 1788.

William Cobbett was married in 1792. He first met his future wife when he was serving as sergeant-major in New Brunswick. He had found her one morning before it was distinctly light scrubbing out a washing-tub before her father's door. "That's the girl for me," he said. They became engaged, but Cobbett's regiment was ordered home to England. Not able to see her before he left, he sent her 150 guineas, the whole of his savings, and begged her to use it till his return. Four years afterwards, when he was able to marry her, he found her employed as a servant-of-all-work at £5 a year, and on their first interview she put into his hands the 150 guineas untouched.

Anthony Trollope married Miss Rose Heseltine in 1844.

Among others who married at this age are Francis Beaumont, Thomas Fuller, Henry Fielding, Joseph Priestley, Sir Philip Francis, Thomas Jefferson, William Maginn, and Sir Bartle Frere.

Age 30

Anselm, in 1063, succeeded Lanfranc as Prior of Bec. He was in Bec as prior and abbot for thirty years, and during this period his powers developed themselves to the full. In 1093 he succeeded Lanfranc as Archbishop of Canterbury.

Charles II. became King of England by the Restoration in 1660.

Otway published his last and greatest dramatic work, *Venice Preserved*, 1682.

Charles Babbage was awarded, in 1822, the first gold medal given by the Astronomical Society for his first calculating machine.

Calvin, in 1539, married Idalette de Bure.

George Canning, in 1800, married Joan Scott, sister to the Duchess of Portland, a young lady with £100,000.

At thirty William Hazlitt made his amazing marriage with Miss Stoddart in 1808.

Charles Darwin married his cousin, Miss Emma Wedgwood, in 1839, and soon after fell into ill-health, from which he suffered all his days. His work was made possible by the lifelong devotion of his wife, who sheltered him from every avoidable annoyance, and omitted nothing that might save him trouble.

Others who married at thirty are Sir Edward Coke, Hugh Blair, John Austin, Thomas Day, author of "Sandford and Merton," Michael Faraday, John Foxe, and Thomas Carlyle in 1826.



X

“WHEN OUR CHILDREN ARE ABOUT US”: FROM THIRTY TO THIRTY-FIVE

IN this chapter we begin at noon, and our lustrum ends at one o'clock. It comprises the years from thirty to thirty-five. This in ordinary lives is the time when the home contains father and mother and little children. It is the time when our children are about us.

I have taken my title from that of a fine sermon by Dr. Alexander Raleigh, who had much of that distinction of style for which his son, Professor Walter Raleigh, is so well known. He took it from the dirge of Job, who, in the day of his accumulated calamity, recalled in a thrilling note the vanished joy of the time “when my children were about me.” I once heard a wise and venerable man say that this was the happiest time in all life.

It is a time that does not last long, this time when the little birds are in the nest and the parent birds are not distant. Soon there comes the separation from home. The years bring their changes.

“How the children leave us, and no traces
Linger of that smiling angel band—
Gone! for ever gone, and in their places
Weary men and women stand.”

But there is for most men and women the rich and peaceful time, when they teach their children and their children teach them, when the hearth is uninvaded, and when love and hope have their sweetest entertainment.

I

Of this period there are many accounts in biography and fiction. Perhaps of all biographies the *Life of Dr. Thomas Arnold* gives the greatest impression of happiness. There is so little to “tame the glaring white” that some have even been irritated by its splendour. Thus Dr. Mozley, in his clever but slightly splenetic criticism of the book, complains that Arnold is too happy to be interesting. Indeed, his was a great happiness, and it was centred in the family.

“A family was a temple and a church with Arnold—a living sanctuary and focus of religious joy—a paradise, a heaven upon earth. It was the

horn of plenty, the sparkling cup, the grape and the pomegranate, the very cream of human feeling and sentiment, and the very well-spring of spiritual hopes and aspirations. He thought and he taught, and he worked and he played, and he looked at sun, and earth, and sky with a domestic heart. The horizon of family life mixes with the sky-eye life above, and the earthly landscape melted, by a quiet process of nature, into the heavenly one. 'I do not wonder,' he said, 'that it was thought a great misfortune to die childless in old times, when they had not fuller light—it seems so completely wiping a man out of existence.'"

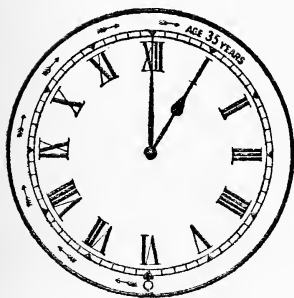
The very act of existence was an hourly pleasure to Arnold. He dwells upon "the almost awful happiness of his domestic life." The entire happiness that he tastes year after year and day after day is almost startling. This does not quite please Mozley. He says :

"Arnold's character is too luscious, too joyous, too luxuriant, too brimful. The colour is good, but the composition is too rich. Head full, heart full, eyes beaming, affections met, sunshine in the breast, all nature embracing him—here is too much glow of earthly mellowness, too much actual liquid in the light. We do not discern the finest element of interest in Arnold's character; he is too full to want our sympathy, too happy to be interesting. The happy instinct is despotic in him; he cannot help it, but he is always happy, likes everything

that he is doing so prodigiously—the tail is wagging, the bird whistles, the cricket chirps.”

But I prefer the humble wonder with which Charlotte Brontë, who knew the taste of misery, writes on the same subject :

“I was struck, too, by the almost unbroken happiness of his life; the happiness resulting chiefly, no doubt, from the right use to which he put that health and strength which God had given him, but also owing partly to a singular exemption from those deep and bitter griefs which most human beings are called on to endure. His wife was what he wished; his children were healthy and promising; his own health was excellent; his undertakings were crowned with success; even death was kind, for, however sharp the



pains of his last hour, they were but brief. God's blessing seems to have accompanied him from the cradle to the grave. One feels thankful to know that it has been permitted to any man to live such a life.”

John Foster, the essayist, was as great a contrast to his contemporary, Thomas Arnold, as could be imagined. If any one habitually looked at the dark side of things it was he. Yet even John Foster writes in a grimly tender way of his early experience as a husband and father.

"I have noticed the curious fact of the difference of the effect of what other people's children do and one's own. In the situations I have formerly been in, any great noise and racket of children would have extremely incommoded me if I wanted to read, think, or write. But I never mind, as to any such matter of convenience, how much din is made by *these* brats if it is not absolutely in the room where I am at work. When I am with them I am apt to make them, and join in making them, make a still bigger tumult and noise ; so that their mother sometimes complains that we all want whipping together. As to liking freaks and vivacity, I do not feel myself much older than I was twenty years since. I have a great dislike to all stiff and formal and unnecessary gravity ; if it were not so I should be to children quite an old man, and could have no easy companionship with them. It must be a great evil for parents to have with their children an immovable puritanical solemnity, especially when the disproportion in age is so unusually great, as in my case."

I wish I could find room for illustrations of the passionate devotion with which children requite a parent's love, but they are scattered thick in the records of humanity. One of the most pleasing is the story of John Keats's mother, who inspired her children with an extraordinary affection.

"When, on an occasion of illness, the doctor ordered her not to be disturbed for some time,

John (between four and five years old) kept sentinel at her door for above three hours *with an old sword he had picked up*, and allowed no one to enter."

II

George Eliot delights to linger on such scenes. Full of life and love was the Hall Farm where Mr. and Mrs. Poyser brought up Marty and Tommy and Totty. The farm was in a good land, where they ate bread without scarceness. After the trouble and sorrow are over we have in the Epilogue the home of Adam Bede and Dinah and Seth and the children :

" 'I see him, Seth,' Dinah said, as she looked into the house. 'Let us go and meet him. Come, Lisbeth, come with mother.'

"The last call was answered immediately by a small fair creature with pale auburn hair and grey eyes, little more than four years old, who ran out silently and put her hand into her mother's.

" 'Come, uncle Seth,' said Dinah.

" 'Ay, ay, we're coming,' Seth answered from within, and presently appeared stooping under the doorway, being taller than usual by the black head of a sturdy two-year-old nephew, who had caused some delay by demanding to be carried on uncle's shoulder.

" 'Better take him on thy arm, Seth,' said Dinah,

looking fondly at the stout, black-eyed fellow. 'He's troublesome to thee so.'

"'Nay, nay: Addy likes a ride on my shoulder. I can carry him so for a bit.' A kindness which young Addy acknowledged by drumming his heels with promising force against uncle Seth's chest. But to walk by Dinah's side, and be tyrannised over by Dinah's and Adam's children, was uncle Seth's earthly happiness.

"'Where didst see him?' asked Seth, as they walked on into the adjoining field. 'I can't catch sight of him anywhere.'

"'Between the hedges by the roadside,' said Dinah. 'I saw his hat and his shoulder. There he is again.'

'Trust thee for catching sight of him if he's anywhere to be seen,' said Seth, smiling. 'Thee't like poor mother used to be. She was always on the look out for Adam, and could see him sooner than other folks, for all her eyes got dim.'"

In all the writings of Dickens there is nothing written with more genuine heart and zest than his story of the Kenwigses. In celebrating the eighth anniversary "of that happy day on which the Church of England as by law established had bestowed Mrs. Kenwigs upon Mr. Kenwigs," the lady wore a gown so successful that Mr. Kenwigs said the eight years of matrimony and the five children seemed all a dream, and Mrs. Kenwigs younger and more blooming than on the very first

Sunday he had kept company with her. After supper, the five little Kenwigses being distributed among the company to prevent the possibility of Mrs. Kenwigs being overcome by the blaze of their combined beauty, the talk begins :

“ ‘This day eight year,’ said Mr. Kenwigs, after a pause. ‘Dear me—ah!’ ”

“This reflection was echoed by all present, who said, ‘Ah!’ first, and ‘Dear me!’ afterwards.

“ ‘I was younger then,’ tittered Mrs. Kenwigs.

“ ‘No,’ said the collector.

“ ‘Certainly not,’ added everybody.

“ ‘I remember my niece,’ said Mr. Lillyvick, surveying his audience with a grave air; ‘I remember her, on that very afternoon, when she first acknowledged to her mother a partiality for Kenwigs. “Mother,” she says, “I love him.” ’ ”

“ ‘ “Adore him,” I said, uncle,’ interposed Mrs. Kenwigs.

“ ‘ “Love him,” I think, my dear,’ said the collector firmly.

“ ‘Perhaps you are right, uncle,’ replied Mrs. Kenwigs submissively. ‘I thought it was “Adore.” ’ ”

“ ‘ “Love,” my dear,’ retorted Mr. Lillyvick. “Mother,” she says, “I love him!” “What do I hear?” cries her mother; and instantly falls into strong convulsions.’ ”

“A general exclamation of astonishment burst from the company.

"‘Into strong convulsions,’ repeated Mr. Lillyvick, regarding them with a rigid look. ‘Kenwigs will excuse my saying, in the presence of friends, that there was a very great objection to him, on the ground that he was beneath the family, and would disgrace it. You remember, Kenwigs?’

"‘Certainly,’ replied that gentleman, in no way displeased at the reminiscence, inasmuch as it proved beyond all doubt what a high family Mrs. Kenwigs came of.

"‘I shared in that feeling,’ said Mr. Lillyvick: ‘Perhaps it was natural; perhaps it wasn’t.’

"A gentle murmur seemed to say that, in one of Mr. Lillyvick’s station, the objection was not only natural, but highly praiseworthy.

"‘I came round to him in time,’ said Mr. Lillyvick. ‘After they were married, and there was no help for it, I was one of the first to say that Kenwigs must be taken notice of. The family *did* take notice of him, in consequence, and on my representation; and I am bound to say—and proud to say—that I have always found him a very honest, well-behaved, upright, respectable sort of man. Kenwigs, shake hands.’

"‘I am proud to do it, sir,’ said Mr. Kenwigs.

"‘So am I, Kenwigs,’ rejoined Mr. Lillyvick.

"‘A very happy life I have led with your niece, sir,’ said Kenwigs.

"‘It would have been your own fault if you had not, sir,’ remarked Mr. Lillyvick.

“ ‘Morleena Kenwigs,’ cried her mother, at this crisis, much affected, ‘kiss your dear uncle.’

“The young lady did as she was requested, and the three other little girls were successively hoisted up to the collector’s countenance, and subjected to the same process, which was afterwards repeated on them by the majority of those present.”

Nobody understood better than Dickens how much genuine worth and stability there was in this family life, how much such affection does to keep the life of a nation green.

III

There is a beautiful and indomitable hopefulness in the heart of the world, and it is nowhere more surely shown than in the welcome given to children. *These same shall comfort us.* If we were to conjure up all the possibilities and all the fears, our solitudes might be painful, but it is wiser to have hope of the new spring world and to delight in it and learn from it. The parents must do their part, and they will not lack for advisers. But the great thing is that they should keep their children about them. Herbert Spencer’s formidable counsels on education are softened by his great liberality in the matter of allowing sweetmeats, and for the rest his system might act as the training of her father acted on Margaret Fuller. I scarcely remember a more dreary story than the poor girl tells.

"His influence on me was great, and opposed to the natural unfolding of my character, which was fervent, of strong grasp, and disposed to infatuation and self-forgetfulness. He made the common prose world so present to me that my natural bias was controlled. I did not go mad, as many would do, at being continually roused from my dreams. I had too much strength to be crushed, and, since I must put on the fetters, could not submit to let them impede my motions. My own world sank deep within, away from the surface of my life."

One of Victor Hugo's early poems about children is quieter and not less beautiful than most of his work in this kind :

"Thou knowest not how sweet the time
Of thy bloomy April prime.
Oh envy not our older years,
Envy not our griefs and fears,
When even laughter dies in tears !

"Thy lovely age is soon forgot,
Like woodland airs remember'd not ;
Like a distant song it flieth,
Like the halycon's shadow dieth.

"Now thy thoughts of peace and glee
Hang, rich blossoms, on life's tree—
Taste the morning, taste the spring,
Thy hours, like flowers, do fondly cling,
Each hour the other engarlanding,
Time and grief, and night and day,
Will steal their sweet perfume away—
Be not more unkind than they !

“Peace dear infant, pr’ythee wait,
Time will soon be at thy gate,
All its woes, and pains, and cares,
Showing in thy silver hairs ;
But now laugh on, with merry smiles,
Laughter that no sin beguiles—
Sweet child, whose eye of azure youth
Reflects the cloudless face of truth.”

Nor do I sympathise with those who object to the practice of teaching children to repeat prayers before they fully understand them. This was the doctrine of Whately, and he was sharply taken to task by Newman in words I am glad to copy :

“We cannot—no, for the life of us, we cannot—forget the delight with which we have often looked upon a child, perhaps little beyond infancy—kneeling at its mother’s feet—with its little hands and eyes raised towards heaven in the posture of supplication—repeating words, perhaps, too full of awful meaning for its young capacity, and afterwards laid to rest with its parent’s blessing murmured over its head. It may be very superstitious—but we have always, hitherto, regarded this as one of the most lovely spectacles which this world of ruthless turbulence and confusion has to show : and we have never witnessed it without remembering the words of our blessed Lord, and thinking of those angel forms which stand always before the presence of our heavenly Father, ready to do their gracious ministries on behalf of that simplicity and lowliness of which childhood is the

Saviour's favourite emblem and representative. And can it be that emotions such as these are but the promptings of the spirit of delusion? Must we start up, and shake off from us all such sentiments and suggestions, as if the father of lies were at our side, distilling pernicious and seductive fancies into our ear? Even so, says our austere and inflexible councillor. Away with it all. Reform it altogether. It is no better than a mischievous vanity. Every word that the child utters without attaching a distinct sense to it, is just so much empty jargon, about as valuable as the Credos and the Ave-Marias which come guggling, by the hour, from the lips of the infatuated Romanist. Well—God help us—we are conscious that we have fallen into the hands of a mighty Master of Reason—one who will hear nothing that cannot be argumentatively established. Nothing can be more disagreeable than to get into the iron gripe of such an antagonist; and in this our desperate and evil case we know not what remains for us but to do, as other obstinate heretics have sometimes done—assume the aspect of martyrdom—and, impaled as we are upon the logic of our inquisitor, to declare that we are determined to perish in our perversion. Yea—verily—we do, in our extremity, proclaim to all Christian people that the practice of accustoming children as early as possible to the attitude of prayer—to the words of prayer—to the house of prayer,—may be innocent and salutary, however

liable it possibly may be to abuse : and this is an 'opinion which fire shall not burn out of us ; we will die in it at the stake.' ”

IV

This lustrum of life is the time for great achievements and decided actions. On this I quote from John Morley in his book on Voltaire :

“ . . . the thirty-third year of his age, that earlier climacteric, when the men with vision first feel conscious of a past, and reflectively mark its shadow. It is then that they either press forward eagerly with new impulse in the way of their high calling, knowing the limitations of circumstance and the hour, or else fainting draw back their hand from the plough, and ignobly leave to another or to none the accomplishment of the work. The narrowness of the cribbed deck that we are doomed to tread, amid the vast space of an eternal sea with fair shores dimly seen and never neared, oppresses the soul with a burden that sorely tries its strength, when the fixed limits first define themselves before it. Those are the strongest who do not tremble beneath this grey, ghostly light, but make it the precursor of an industrious day.”

Dr. Johnson's lines to Mrs. Thrale in completing her thirty-fifth year must not be omitted :

“Oft in danger, yet alive,
We are come to thirty-five ;

Long may better years arrive,
Better years than thirty-five!
Could philosophers contrive
Life to stop at thirty-five,
Time his hours should never drive
O'er the bounds of thirty-five.
High to soar, and deep to dive,
Nature gives at thirty-five.
Ladies, stock and tend your hive,
Trifle not at thirty-five;
For, howe'er we boast and strive,
Life declines from thirty-five :
He that ever hopes to thrive
Must begin by thirty-five ;
And all who wisely wish to wive
Must look on Thrale at thirty-five.”

In this connection the words of Henry Seton Merriman in “The Sowers” may be recalled :

“One finds that, after all, in this world of deceit we are most of us that which we look like. You, madam, look thirty-five to a day, though your figure is still youthful, your hair untouched by grey, your face unseamed by care. You may look in your mirror and note these accidents with satisfaction ; you may feel young and indulge in the pleasures of youth without effort. But you are thirty-five. We know it. We who look at you can see it for ourselves, and if you could only be brought to believe it we think no worse of you on that account.”

FROM THIRTY TO THIRTY-FIVE

Age 31

ON February 10, 1306, Robert Bruce suddenly appeared in Dumfries, and in the Church of the Friars Minor stabbed John Comyn, the late regent of Scotland. This was the turning-point in Bruce's career, and, abandoning further hesitation, he took up the patriotic cause.

Tasso completed "*La Gerusalemme Liberata*" in 1575, and unfortunately determined to obtain for it the imprimatur of the Roman Inquisition. From this rash resolution all his troubles may be dated. In the following year the first symptom of his approaching madness showed itself.

Sir Philip Sidney died of his wounds in 1586. As he was being carried from the field of battle under the walls of Zutphen he asked for drink. "As he was putting the bottle to his mouth," says Fulke Greville, "he saw a poor soldier carried along who had eaten his last at the same ghastly feast, casting up his eyes at the bottle. Which, Sir Philip perceiving, took it from his head before he drank, and delivered it to the poor man with these words: 'Thy necessity is yet greater than mine.'" Sidney's last words were addressed to his brother Robert, who had watched by his bedside: "Love my memory; cherish my friends; their faith to me may assure you they are honest. But above all govern your will and affections by the will and word of your Creator; in me beholding the end of the world with all her vanities."

Pascal, who had already acquired a European reputation in physical science, all at once renounced the study of mathematics and natural philosophy and devoted himself to a life of mortification and prayer.

In 1662 Bossuet came to Paris and began his ten years of wonderful preaching.

Lord Clive, in 1757, won the great battle of Plassey.

This was the crisis in Winckelmann's life. He was a master at the Grammar School of Seehausen, with a salary of about £20 a year, and his longing for travel and study were such that he was just about to take the desperate resolution to give up his employment and throw himself on the world, when he met by accident a young graduate who had just given up the post of amanuensis to Count Bünau, owner of a private library that had no parallel in Germany. Winckelmann applied for the post and ultimately obtained it.

Sydney Smith projected the *Edinburgh Review*, and founded it with Jeffrey and others in 1802. He was for many years the most popular contributor to the *Review*.

Charlotte Brontë published "Jane Eyre" in 1847.

Coventry Patmore published the first part of "The Angel in the House" in 1854.

Among the marriages at this age were those of Edward the Black Prince, who married his cousin Joan, the "Fair Maid of Kent," in 1361.

Martin Bucer married an ex-nun in 1522. This was one of the first marriages of ordained priests among the Reformers.

Mrs. Barbauld (1743-1825) married the husband whose insanity was to bring her so much trouble.

At the same age were married Schiller, in 1790; Thomas De Quincey, in 1816; and W. E. Forster, in 1850.

Dowden remarks that Shakespeare's revolt against the world increased in energy and comprehensiveness as he advanced in years. When he was thirty or thirty-five years of age he found less in the world to arouse his indignation than when he was forty.

Age 32

In 1593 Francis Bacon withstood the encroachment of the Lords on the rights of the Commons in connection with the granting of subsidies to Elizabeth. This act of Bacon's brought upon him the queen's severe displeasure, and hindered his advancement in public life for many years.

On November 12, 1660, while preaching near Ampthill, John

Bunyan was arrested under the Acts against Nonconformists, which had been revived, and was committed to prison. When he was tried he declared his intention of committing the offence again on the first opportunity, and so the authorities were forced to condemn him, though they desired to set him free, and he underwent twelve years' confinement in Bedford county gaol.

General Wolfe died of his wounds on the heights of Abraham, above Quebec, September 13, 1759. He became faint from loss of blood, but was roused out of his stupor by the exclamation of an officer, "They run! They run!" "Who runs?" cried Wolfe, raising himself on his elbow. "The French," answered the officer. "They are flying in all directions." "Then hasten, one of you," rejoined the dying hero, "to Colonel Burton, and tell him to move Webb's regiment down Charles River with all speed, so that the bridge may be secured, and their retreat cut off. . . . Now God be praised," and after a short pause, "I die happy." He turned on his side, and immediately breathed his last.

James Watt patented his steam engine 1768-69.

Thomas Brown, in 1810, was elected colleague to Dugald Stewart in the Chair of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh. In 1845 W. E. Aytoun obtained the Chair of Rhetoric in the same University.

Benjamin Disraeli was returned in 1837 as one of the Tory representatives for Maidstone. His maiden speech in the House of Commons on Irish Electoral Petitions was clever enough, yet was greeted with shouts of laughter, till, losing patience, he cried, "I have begun several things in my time, and have often succeeded at last; and though I sit down now, the time will come when you will hear me." In less than nine years that time did come.

Longfellow published, in 1839, his first volume of poems, "Voices of the Night."

Anthony Trollope published his first novel, "The Macdermots," on the half-profit system. "I can with truth declare that I expected nothing. And I got nothing."

At thirty-two, in 1842, Edward Fitzgerald wrote to Bernard Barton: "In this big London, all full of intellect and pleasure and business, I feel pleasure in dipping down into the country,

and rubbing my hand over the cool dew upon the pastures, as it were. I know very few people here: and care for fewer; I believe I should like to live in a small house just outside a pleasant English town all the days of my life, making myself useful in a humble way, reading my books, and playing a rubber of whist at night."

Among those married at this age were Peter Paul Rubens, who married his first wife, Isabella Brant, in 1609; John Dryden, 1663; William Hogarth, 1729; David Garrick, 1749 (from the day of Mrs. Garrick's marriage till the death of her husband she was never separated from him for twenty-four hours); Thomas Moore, 1811; Bishop Colenso, 1846; Prince Bismarck, 1847; Walter Bagehot, 1858.

Age 33

Alexander the Great died in Babylon 323 B.C.

Demosthenes, in 351 B.C., delivered the "First Philippic," in which he urged that a force should be sent to the coasts of Thrace, and that citizens should serve in person.

Augustine resolved to declare himself a Christian, and was baptized by Ambrose at Milan on April 25, 387.

Edward III. won the battle of Crécy in 1346.

Erasmus published in 1500 his "Adagia," and its immense and varied learning astonished the literary world.

Martin Luther, on October 31, 1517, posted up his ninety-five theses on the door of Wittenberg Church.

Otway perished miserably in 1685. The actual circumstances are doubtful, "but that indigence and its concomitants, sorrow and despondency, pressed hard upon him has never been denied, whatever immediate cause might bring him to the grave."

Gray wrote his "Elegy in a Country Churchyard" in 1749.

Thomas Jefferson, in 1776, drew up the Declaration of Independence. He asked that his tombstone should testify of it as the greatest achievement of his life.

William Carey, in 1794, landed in Bengal as a missionary.

Priscilla Lloyd, sister of Charles Lloyd, the friend of Coleridge and Lamb, and the wife of Wordsworth, Master of Trinity, died at thirty-three, when her husband was Dean of Bocking. Lamb

writes to Manning, October 1800: "Priscilla meditates going to see *Pizarro* at Drury Lane to-night (from her uncle's) under cover of coming to dine with me . . . *heu tempora! heu mores!*—I have barely time to finish, as I expect her and Robin every minute." She did not live to become mistress of Trinity Lodge. When her son Charles visited her grave, about 1856, he found it covered with fresh turf, and learned "that this had continued to be done every year by an old woman who cherished her memory from the time of her death, more than forty years before."

Sir Walter Scott published, in 1805, "*The Lay of the Last Minstrel.*"

H. F. Cary published his translation of the "*Inferno.*"

Thomas Arnold entered upon his office as Head Master of Rugby in 1828.

Sir Charles Lyell, who established the principles of geology on a sound and philosophical basis, was born in 1797, and published the first volume of his celebrated "*Principles of Geology*" in 1830, when he was thirty-three. During his last illness the venerable author was engaged on a twelfth edition. When he was sixty-six, in 1863, he published his famous work on the "*Antiquity of Man.*"

Elias Lönnrot published, in 1835, Finland's great epic poem, the renowned "*Kalevala.*" He surmised that the various songs that he had heard from the lips of the people in the Russian Karelian border parishes were not complete in themselves, but parts of one grand whole. So he drew the *Kalevala* out of the forest depths, where it had lived for so long unknown to the world. In 1849 a new edition was issued, enlarged by the results of fifteen more years of hard and self-denying labours. He died in 1884, aged eighty-two, a man noted for his modesty and patriarchal simplicity, a true folk-man.

Age 34

Thomas Fuller wrote his "*Holy and Prophane States*" in 1642.

Molière produced *L'Étourdi* and *Le Dépit Amoureux*, the first of his original plays, in 1656.

Joseph Butler, in 1726, published the "*Fifteen Sermons.*"

Thomas Gray published his "*Elegy,*" in 1751.

Napoleon I., in 1803, ruptured the peace of Amiens, and plunged Europe into war to satisfy his grasping ambition.

Mungo Park sailed on his second and last expedition to West Africa, in 1805. There are no authentic accounts of his death, but he was probably drowned in the Niger in attempting to escape from his boat to the shore when attacked by savages.

In 1809 Jane Austen prepared for the press "*Sense and Sensibility*," begun in 1797, and "*Pride and Prejudice*," begun in 1796. They were published in 1811 and 1813.

In 1874 Thomas Hardy published "*Far from the Madding Crowd*."

Montaigne was married to Françoise de la Chassaine. It was rather a marriage of convenience and family arrangement than of love.

Cuvier married Madame Duvancel in 1803.

In 1812 Sir Humphry Davy published his "*Elements of Chemical Philosophy*," and in the same year he married Mrs. Apreece, who brought him a large fortune.

Benjamin Disraeli, in 1839, married the wealthy widow of Mr. Wyndham Lewis. She was much older than himself, but the marriage appears to have been on the whole a happy one; it relieved him from financial embarrassment, and left him to pursue his career.

Age 35

Dante, in 1300, commenced his "*Divina Commedia*."

Isaac Watts published his "*Hymns and Spiritual Songs*," in 1707-9.

John Wesley attended the famous meeting in Aldersgate Street at which "his heart was strangely warmed," in 1738. He began his open-air preaching in the following year.

Sheridan delivered, in February, 1787, his famous speech in the House of Commons against Warren Hastings, which helped to decide his impeachment.

Mozart wrote his Requiem Mass, in 1791, in the conviction that he was dying, and when death came upon him he called for the score, and, musing over it, said, "Did I not tell you truly that it was for myself I composed this death-chant?"

Danton was brought to the guillotine on April 8, 1794. His

last words were addressed to the executioner : "Thou wilt show my head to the people ; it is worth showing." Robespierre was guillotined at the same age.

Napoleon was crowned Emperor in Nôtre Dame, 1804.

John Foster published his *Essays*, in 1805.

Mark Pattison, born 1813, says : "While my contemporaries who started so far ahead of me, fixed their mental horizon before they were thirty-five, mine has been ever enlarging and expanding."

In 1815 Chalmers was called to the Tron Church, Glasgow, and began his great career as preacher.

Sir David Brewster in 1816 invented the kaleidoscope, but from some defect in the registration of the patent it was pirated.

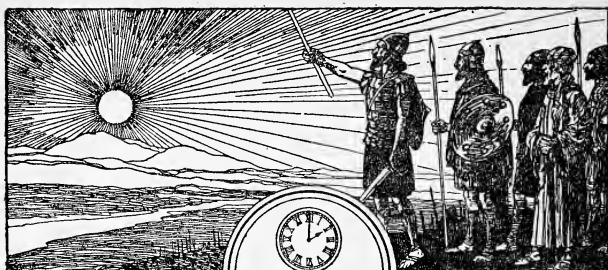
Dante says, in the "Convito," that "our Saviour Christ, whose nature was perfect, chose to die in the thirty-fourth year of His age, because it did not befit Divinity to decline."

In the "Summa" Aquinas says Christ chose to die for us in the flower of His age for three reasons : "(1) The more to commend His love to us, because He gave His life for us at its prime ; (2) because it was not fitting that there should appear any diminution of His natural powers ; and (3) that dying and rising again in His natural prime, He should foreshadow the quality of the bodies of those who should afterwards rise in Him."

Father Ryder has the following :

"Though thy pangs were hard indeed,
And all Thy body wrench'd and wrung,
Some pains Thou hadst not, dying young.
I know that 'neath the olive's shade
A secular weight on Thee was laid ;
The bitterness of ages past
Into Thy cup of life was cast,
And all time's miseries yet to come
Wrought in Thy mystic martyrdom ;
Yet scarce was middle age begun
When Thou hadst all Thy labours done,

Th' Eternal years in mortal span
Wax'd from the child into the man:
It was not meet that God should wane
From man into the child again;
And so the feet that Mary kiss'd
The withering touch of age have miss'd,
And not a golden hair was grey
Upon Thy crucifixion day.
High on the crest of manhood's hill
Thou didst Thy ministry fulfil."



XI

“SUN, STAND THOU STILL UPON GIBEON”: FROM THIRTY-FIVE TO FORTY

THE clock has moved to two p.m. ; we complete the eighth lustrum of life. The period covered is from thirty-five to forty. Nothing could be more futile than the attempt to fit into a framework all the facts of existence, but of this lustrum something definite may be affirmed. This is the Vital Solstice. The point here is the state of stable equilibrium of the vital processes. For a time—probably, however, including a part of the next lustrum—the vital processes of anabolism and catabolism just balance each other, so that, as the sun at the solstices appears for a short time to cease its change of course, the vital processes seem to stand still.

This, then, is the period of fullest energy and

highest achievement. It has also been a time peculiarly fatal to men and women of high genius. Also, it is recognised by all as a period when something happens. To be forty is to have reached a marked stage in life. This milestone is not as the other milestones. A mischievous cry of our age is "Too old at forty," and it will take much to silence it. It has received the weighty sanction of a man eminent as a physician and with powers which might have made him eminent as a writer. The achievements of the period are partly chronicled in the notes appended to this chapter. I am moved in this chapter to write first about the deaths that have taken place in the eighth lustrum, and then I shall attempt some reply to Professor Osler. Succeeding chapters ought to contain facts that will answer him, but it may be convenient to marshal a few at the present stage in our journey.

I

No death that took place in the nineteenth century moved men's hearts as Byron's did. The words, "Byron is dead," tolled like a bell through a universal grief. "The late remorse of love" was at work. Byron had been striving to escape from the satiety of Hedonism in a romantic adventure, and gave his life in a great cause. In his last hours he fancied he was leading the attack on Lepanto, and was heard exclaiming, "Forwards,

forwards ! follow me !” Then he had time to say, “I am content to die.” Alfred Tennyson was fourteen when he heard of Byron’s death (April 19, 1824), “a day when the whole world seemed to be darkened for me.” He carved on a rock the words, “Byron is dead.” Mrs. Crosse, in her “Red Letter Days,” tells us how Robert Browning burst out with the remark : “Byron was one of the most wonderful men ever created,” and, turning to his friend, he said, pressing her arm in the way he had when much interested : “To think of all this coming to an end at thirty-seven !” Mr. Cotter Morison threw out the query : “Is he a great poet ?” Browning, for answer, recited with intense feeling those well-known lines—

“’Tis time this heart should be unmoved,
Since others it has ceased to move :
Yet, though I cannot be beloved,
Still let me love !

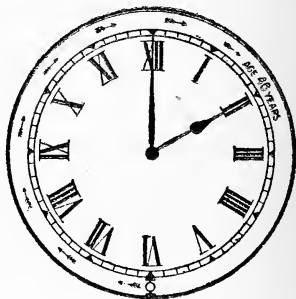
“My days are in the yellow leaf !
The flowers and fruits of love are gone ;
The worm, the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone !

“The fire that on my bosom preys
Is lone as some volcanic isle ;
No torch is kindled at its blaze—
A funeral pile.

“Seek out—less often sought than found—
A soldier’s grave, for thee the best ;
Then look around, and choose thy ground,
And take thy rest.”

Robert Burns was a little older when he died at thirty-seven. He fell asleep in the open air on returning late from a carouse at the Globe Tavern, and an attack of rheumatic fever followed. His state of health soon became alarming. He was taken to the Solway to try sea-bathing. He returned to Dumfries on July 18, sank rapidly, and died July 21, 1796. Carlyle says :

"We are not medically informed whether any continuance of years was, at this period, probable for Burns; whether his death is to be looked on as in some sense an accidental event, or only as the natural consequence of the long series of events that had preceded. The latter seems to be the likelier opinion; and yet is by no means a certain one. At all events, as we have said, *some* change could not be very distant. Three gates of deliverance, it seems to us, were open for Burns : clear poetical activity, madness, or death. The first, with longer life, was still possible, though not probable ; for physical causes were beginning to be concerned in it : and yet Burns had an iron resolution ; could he but have seen and felt that not only his highest glory, but his first duty, and the true medicine for all his woes lay here. The second was less



probable ; for his mind was ever among the clearest and firmest. So the milder third gate was opened for him : and he passed not softly, yet speedily, into that still country, where the hailstorms and fire-showers do not reach, and the heaviest-laden wayfarer at length lays down his load ! ”

Pascal died in convulsions on August 19, 1662. Great as a man of letters, as a philosopher, as a theologian, and as a mathematician and physicist, he is with the immortals. Professor Chrystal has said : “ Whether we look at his pure mathematical or at his physical researches we receive the same impression of Pascal ; we see the strongest marks of a great original genius creating new ideas, and seizing upon, mastering, and pursuing farther everything that was fresh and unfamiliar in his time. After the lapse of more than two hundred years we can still point to much in exact science that is absolutely his ; and we can indicate infinitely more which is due to his inspiration.”

Charlotte Brontë died at the age of thirty-nine. She had long been in weak health—shy and shrinking, melancholy and self-conscious—and her feeble, nervous, suffering body was always sinking to its fall. After her last story, “ Villette,” was published and received with a burst of acclamation, the lonely author sat day by day in her chair, with saddest memories for her only company, late into the night, conversing with the spirits of the dead. A gleam of happiness came before the end. She

was touched at last by the steadfast devotion of her lover, and was married on June 19, 1854. Her health soon became precarious, and she died on March 31, 1855. Her last words were: "Oh! I am not going to die, am I? He will not separate us; we have been so happy." So ended a deeply shadowed life. Her early friend, Mary Taylor, declared that Mrs. Gaskell's biography was "not so gloomy as the truth," that Miss Brontë had lived all her days in a walking nightmare of poverty and self-suppression.

II

The gloom of these deaths is lightened if we are to believe, with Professor Osler, that fruitful life ends at forty. After saying that he has two fixed ideas, Dr. Osler gives, as the first—"The comparative uselessness of men above forty years of age. This may seem shocking, and yet, read aright, the world's history bears out the statement. Take the sum of human achievement in action, in science, in art, in literature—subtract the work of the men above forty; and, while we should miss great treasures, even priceless treasures, we would practically be where we are to-day. It is difficult to name a great and far-seeing conquest of the mind which has not been given to the world by a man on whose back the sun was still shining. The effective, moving, vitalising work of the world

is done between the ages of twenty-five and forty—these fifteen golden years of plenty, the anabolic or constructive period, in which there is always a balance in the mental bank, and the credit is still good.”

The words to be emphasised are astonishing words : “ *The comparative uselessness of men above forty years of age.*” Dr. Osler can only be answered by facts, and the chapters which follow will supply many of the facts. But a rough reply may be given, with a very little consideration. I have tried to think of the greatest works in imaginative literature, and I recall the memorable declaration of Macaulay, who says in one of his speeches on the law of copyright : “ No great work of imagination has ever been produced under the age of thirty or thirty-five years, and the instances are few in which any have been produced under the age of forty. I venture to say that no man acquainted with literary history will deny that, taking the writings of authors generally, the best and most valuable of their works have been produced within the last seventeen years of their lives.”

There are doubtless men like Frederic Ozanam, of whom Lacordaire said that he was one with whom all blooms quickly, and all comes into bloom at once, as if time and eternity were at work on them together. But the masterpieces of the imagination are the fruit of long choosing and late

beginning. The greatest prose book in the world is perhaps "Don Quixote." Cervantes, the author, was born in 1547, and he published the first part of what Sainte-Beuve has called "the book of humanity" in 1605. It was completed about a year before, when the author was in the utmost stress of poverty. Could it have been written sooner? Could it have been written without the five years' slavery in Algiers, from which Cervantes emerged sweet, undiscouraged, and unembittered?

Many would place beside "Don Quixote" "The Pilgrim's Progress." John Bunyan was born in 1628, and the first edition of "The Pilgrim's Progress" was published in 1678. It was probably written in 1675, when Bunyan was approaching fifty. Along with these books may be placed "Clarissa." The French are our chief rivals in prose fiction, and their opinion of "Clarissa" is summed up in the saying of Alfred de Musset—that it is *le premier roman du monde*. Among their latest critics there are those who write of "Clarissa" as the noblest of all novels, the most pathetic and the most sublime. "The conception stands by itself amid all the conceptions of genius. No Greek, no Italian, no English poet has painted such a figure in the great picture gallery which is common to the world. Neither ancient nor modern woman has ever stood before us thus pale and splendid in the shame which is not hers, sweet soul, though it kills her." When Samuel Richard-

son began "Clarissa," in 1744, he was a man of fifty-five, and he was about sixty when it was completed.

"Robinson Crusoe" was written when the author was fifty-eight. Defoe had lived a hard life. The politician was worn with conflict, the tradesman was unable to cope with his losses, and the heart-weary writer pathetically exclaimed, "had William (*i.e.* King William III.) lived, he never would have suffered me to be treated as I have been in this world." A fit of apoplexy had like to have ended his sorrows, but he recovered from it to commence a new life, and to gain a literary immortality. In 1719 appeared the first volume of "Robinson Crusoe," a book which age cannot stale nor fashion render obsolete, which has won for its author the kindly love of all readers for all time. I might refer to "Gulliver's Travels," published in 1726, when Swift was fifty-nine, and to "Humphry Clinker," Smollett's greatest book, published in 1771, when he was fifty; but it will be sufficient to mention the Waverley Novels. Scott was a poet, but as a poet he is in the second rank. He could never express his genius in poetical form. Compare his empty, romantic picture of James Fitz-James with the lustrous splendour of his portrait of Mary, Queen of Scots. But the first of the Waverley Novels was published when Scott was forty-three. Dr. Osler may think that, without him, the world would have been where it is; but

others will say, with Mark Rutherford : " If anywhere in another world the blessings which men have conferred here are taken into account in distributing reward, surely the choicest in store of the Most High will be reserved for His servant Scott! It may be said of others that they have made the world wise or rich, but of him it must be said that he, more than all, has made the world happier—wiser, too, wiser through its happiness."

Instances might be multiplied from poetry, but it will be sufficient to mention "*Paradise Lost*," at which Milton laboured from 1658 to 1665, till he published it at fifty.

FROM THIRTY-FIVE TO FORTY

Age 36

IN 1302 Dante was banished from Florence; and though he made several attempts to return, they were not successful, and he spent his nineteen remaining years in wandering.

Correggio finished his masterpiece, the "Assumption of the Blessed Virgin," in the cupola of the cathedral in Parma, in 1530.

Bacon published the first edition of his "Essays" in 1597.

Sir Thomas Browne married in 1641.

Richard Crashaw, the poet, died in 1649.

In 1658 Molière published his first important play, *Les Précieuses Ridicules*.

Samuel Pepys was thirty-six when he gave over writing his Diary through approaching blindness. He wrote on May 29, 1669: "And so I betake myself to that course, which is almost as much as to see myself go into my grave: for which, and all the discomforts that will accompany my being blind, the Good God prepare me!"

J. B. Massillon preached the Advent course of sermons at Versailles in 1699, and at once sprang into fame as a pulpit orator.

Jonathan Swift, that mighty and mysterious genius, published anonymously, in 1704, one of the chief prose satires of the world, "The Tale of a Tub," a satire of which the least that can be said is that it would have added to the reputation of Lucian or Erasmus.

Alexander Cruden published his "Concordance of the Holy Scriptures" in 1737.

In 1805 Wellington, then Sir Arthur Wellesley, K.C.B., left India, and thus brought to a close the first great period of his career.

Landor, in the spring of 1811, met a young lady at a ball, and

in his characteristic manner said, "By Heaven! that's the nicest girl in the room, and I'll marry her." He did so, but the marriage was not happy. The lady's name was Julia Thuillier.

In 1821 De Quincey published the "Confessions of an Opium Eater."

Eugene Sue achieved his first great success in the novel "Mathilde," published in 1840.

Edgar Allan Poe had turned thirty-six when in 1845 he published "The Raven."

W. M. Thackeray published "Vanity Fair" in monthly parts, 1847-48.

H. T. Buckle published, in 1857, the first volume of his "History of Civilisation in Europe."

Philip Bourke Marston, the blind poet, died in 1887.

"Yes, sir," as the old farmer told Prince Otto in Stevenson's romance, "by six-and-thirty, if a man be a follower of God's laws, he should have made himself a home and a good name to live by; he should have got a wife and a blessing on his marriage; and his works, as the Word says, should begin to follow him."

Age 37

Michelangelo completed the painting of the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in 1512.

Sir Thomas More composed the second part of his "Utopia" in the Low Countries in 1515, and the first after his return to England in 1516.

Cervantes married in 1584.

Richelieu received the Cardinal's hat in consideration of his services in reconciling King Louis XIII. with his mother.

In 1609 Kepler published his most important work, "Astronomia Nova," containing what are known as his First and Second Laws. The Third Law was announced in his "Harmonica Mundi," 1619.

In 1699 Richard Bentley's immortal "Dissertation upon the Epistles of Phalaris" appeared.

Richard Steele, in 1709, issued the first number of the *Tatler*.

Goethe visited Italy, and was in the South from the autumn of 1786 to June 1788, a most fruitful period in his life.

Marie Antoinette was guillotined on October 16, 1793.

Alexander Wilson, in 1803, determined on writing an American

ornithology. Before he had determined on this enterprise we find him requesting Mr. Bartram to write the names of the birds on all the drawings he sends, since, with the exception of three or four, he does not know them. This from a man struggling with an American ornithology!

Sir Charles Bell, in 1811, published "A New Idea of the Anatomy of the Brain." He also married in this year.

Captain Marryat, in 1829, published his first novel, "Frank Mildmay."

John Stuart Mill published, in 1843, his "System of Logic."

George Eliot published the "Scenes of Clerical Life" in 1857. Before that she had given no real indication of her power. She had produced translations of Strauss and Feuerbach and some heavy review essays. She promised to become another Sara Hennell, and was not nearly equal in liveliness and point to Harriet Martineau. What was it that changed her?

Among those who died at thirty-seven were Raphael, in 1520; Henry Purcell, the musician, of consumption in 1695; William Collins, the poet, in 1759; A. M. Toplady, the author of the hymn "Rock of Ages," of consumption in 1778; William Motherwell, the poet, in 1835; Winthrop Mackworth Praed, of consumption in July, 1839; F. W. Robertson, of Brighton, in 1853.

Age 38

Luther was thirty-eight when he made his heroic stand before the Emperor Charles V. at the Diet of Worms, 1521.

The following inscription exists in the ancient Château de Montaigne, near Bordeaux: "In the year of our Lord 1571, aged thirty-eight, on the eve of the kalends of March, the anniversary day of his birth, Michael de Montaigne, having long been weary of the slavery of courts and public employments, takes refuge in the bosom of the learned Virgins. He designs, in quiet and indifference to all things, to conclude there the remainder of his life, already more than half past, and he has dedicated to repose and liberty this agreeable and peaceful abode, which he has inherited from his ancestors." In 1570 he had resigned his office of "conseiller," and in 1571 had succeeded to the family estate.

Edmund Spenser published the first three books of "The Faery Queen" in 1590.

Sir Thomas Browne published, in 1643, the first authorised edition of "Religio Medici."

William Penn, in 1682, having obtained a grant of land in North America, set sail for the Delaware, and arrived there after a voyage of nine weeks.

In 1751 Diderot commenced publishing his *Encyclopædia*, in which he showed unprecedented diligence and perseverance.

Oliver Goldsmith published "The Vicar of Wakefield" in 1766.

In 1788 there was born to Sir Robert Peel the elder his celebrated son, and on this son he fixed his hope of obtaining an historical lustre to his name, a hope which, strangely enough, was amply fulfilled.

Schiller wrote the greater part of the Poems of the third period, which include some of his best work, and in particular his Ballads, in 1797.

At thirty-eight, in 1809, Sydney Smith went to the village living of Foston-le-Clay, in Yorkshire, where he remained for twenty years and did his best work.

W. H. Prescott at this age found work very irksome, and resorted to all sorts of curious expedients to force and punish himself. The following are characteristic entries in his diary: "I have worked lazily enough latterly, or rather, have been too lazy to work at all. Ended the old year (1834) very badly, the last four weeks absolute annihilation." "Another three months since the last entry, a three months of *dolce far niente*. Not so *dolce* either. Fortunately for the good economy and progress of the species, activity—activity, mental and physical—is indispensable to happiness."

O. W. Holmes, in 1847, was appointed Professor of Anatomy and Physiology at Harvard—a post which he held until 1882.

Mrs. Gaskell published "Mary Barton," anonymously, in 1848. Its success was "electrical."

Charles Dickens published "David Copperfield," which he thought his masterpiece, in 1849-50.

Among those who died at thirty-eight were John Sterling, the subject of Carlyle's biography, at Ventnor, September 18, 1844; and Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, the musician, 1847.

Age 39

Euripides gained for the first time, in 519 B.C., the first prize for a tragedy, which, during a poetical career of nearly fifty years, he gained only five times in all.

On May 15, A.D. 719, at Rome, Pope Gregory II. formally laid upon Boniface the work of converting the heathen tribes of Germany, and Boniface entered upon his great career of missionary labour.

In 1066 William the Conqueror invaded England and won the battle of Hastings.

Martin Luther, in 1522, published his translation of the New Testament.

Montaigne wrote, in 1572: "It is now but just fifteen days since I was complete nine-and-thirty years old; I make account to live at least as many more. [He died in 1592.] In the meantime, to trouble a man's self with the thought of a thing so far off is a senseless foolery. But what? Young and old die after the same manner, and no one departs out of life otherwise than if he had just before entered into it; neither is any so old and decrepid who has heard of Methusalem that does not think he has yet twenty years of constitution good at least. Fool that thou art, who has assured unto thee the term of life? Thou dependest upon physicians' tales and stories, but rather consult experience and the fragility of human nature: for according to the common course of things, 'tis long since that thou livedst by extraordinary favour."

In the compete poems of Sir John Davies (1569-1626) we find:

"Brunus, which deems himself a faire sweet youth,
Is thirty-nine yeares of age at least."

Allan Ramsay published "The Gentle Shepherd" in 1725.

James Watt, in 1774, entered into partnership with Mr. Bolton, a hardware manufacturer in Birmingham, and the firm of Bolton & Watt commenced making steam-engines in the year 1775.

During the war of American Independence, Benedict Arnold obtained the command of West Point, in August, 1780, doubtless with the intention of betraying it to the British. Hearing of the capture of Major André, he escaped just in time to the British sloop *Vulture*, thus completing his treachery and desertion.

In 1808 Wellington was appointed to command the British forces destined for the Peninsular War. This opened up the second great period in his career.

Edward Irving was thirty-nine when, in 1831, the extraordinary scenes in connection with prophesyings and speaking with tongues took place in Regent Square Church.

J. G. Bennett, on May 6, 1835, published the first number of the *New York Herald*—a small sheet published daily at one cent. Bennett prepared the entire contents.

1849 was Montalembert's most brilliant year. Sainte-Beuve says: "Up to that time he was admired, but not followed, except by those of his immediate party. Now he is followed willingly by men from all parties."

After the sanguinary battle of Wörth, 1870, Frederick III., then Crown Prince of Prussia, said to Gustav Freytag, the German novelist and playwright, with deep feeling: "I abhor this butchery; I have never striven for a soldier's honours; I should have left military glory to another without any feeling of envy. Yet it has been my fate to pass from one war to another, and from one battlefield to another, and to wade through human blood before I mount the throne of my ancestors."

Among those married at this age were Roger Ascham, who married Margaret Howe in 1554, and said afterwards: "Hitherto she hath founde rather a loveing than a luckye husband unto her"; Richard Bentley, in 1701.

Age 40

Mohammed, after leading a life of meditation, assumed the title of prophet at Mecca when forty years of age.

Canute, King of England, Denmark, and Norway, died in 1035.

Robert Bruce, in 1314, won the battle of Bannockburn.

Edward IV. died in 1483.

It was at the age of forty that St. Teresa awoke, in 1555, to the deeper spiritual life.

Richard Lovelace, the Cavalier lyric poet, died in 1658, poor and in obscure lodgings, in Gunpowder Alley, Shoe Lane, London.

Joseph Bingham, in 1708, began to publish his learned work, "*Origines Ecclesiasticæ*."

William Law, in 1726, wrote his "Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life,"

Alexander Pope published the "Dunciad" in May 1728.

Captain Cook, in 1768, set out on the first of his great voyages. He visited the Society Islands, and circumnavigated and charted New Zealand. He was absent almost three years.

In 1804 a cloud came over the mind of Robert Hall, the celebrated preacher, and he became for a time insane.

George Stephenson, perfecter of the locomotive, born June 9, 1781. In 1821 he was appointed engineer of the Stockton and Darlington Railway. The result was the opening, September 27, 1825, of the first railway over which passengers and goods were carried by locomotives.

Elizabeth Barrett, in 1846, married Robert Browning.

Edgar Allan Poe married in 1849.

Tennyson married Miss Emily Sarah Sellwood in 1850. She was thirty-seven.

George Eliot published "Adam Bede" in 1859.

Henry T. Buckle, the author of the unfinished "History of Civilisation," died in 1862 at Damascus. He was attacked by typhoid fever at Nazareth, but tried to shake it off and struggle onwards when he needed rest. "My book, my book!" were among his last words.

Emily Brontë, writing of forty, says: "A period of mental vigour at which men seldom cherish the delusion of being married for love by girls: that dream is reserved for the solace of our declining years."

D. G. Rossetti wrote to his mother, May 12, 1868: "The reminder of the solemn fact that I am a man of forty now could hardly have come agreeably from any one but yourself. But, considering that the chief blessing of my forty good and bad years has been that not one of them has taken you from me, it is the best of all things to have the same dear love and good wishes still coming to me to-day from your dear hand at a distance, as they would have done from your dear mouth had we seen each other."

Shakespeare writes in his Sonnet:

"When forty winters shall besiege thy brow
And dig deep trenches in thy beauty's field,
Thy youth's proud livery so gazed on now
Will be a tattered weed of small worth held."

Trollope wrote in his "Small House at Allington": "Women at forty do not become ancient misanthropes or stern Rhadamanthine moralists, indifferent to the world's pleasures—no, not even though they be widows. There are those who think that such should be the phase of their minds. I profess that I do not so think. I would have women, and men also, young as long as they can be young. It is not that a woman should call herself in years younger than her father's Family Bible will have her to be. Let her who is forty call herself forty; but if she can be young in spirit at forty, let her show that she is so."

Robert Louis Stevenson, when he was forty, in 1891 wrote to Sidney Colvin: "I was only happy once, that was at Hyères; it came to an end from a variety of reasons—decline of health, change of place, increase of money, age with his stealing steps. Since then, as before then, I know not what it means. But I know pleasure still; pleasure with a thousand faces, and none perfect, a thousand tongues, all broken, a thousand hands, and all of them with scratching nails. High above these I place this delight of weeding out here alone by the garrulous water, under the silence of the high woods, broken by incongruous sounds of birds. And take my life all through, look at it fore and back, and upside down—though I would be very fain to change myself—I would not change my circumstances, unless it were to bring you here."

But perhaps the wisest of all things said about the age of forty is in Cowley's essay "The Danger of Procrastination": "There is no fooling with life when it is once turned beyond forty."



XII

“A GATE IN GHENT”: FROM FORTY TO FORTY-FIVE

WE began at six o'clock in the morning, and we have now come to three o'clock in the afternoon, the period dealt with being forty to forty-five.

I take my title from Sir Henry Taylor's lines :

“There is a gate in Ghent, I passed beside it,
A threshold there worn of my frequent feet
Which I shall cross no more.”

Mr. Frederick Greenwood has said somewhere that the burden of the melancholy which oppresses the later generation of mankind more than any of their predecessors is expressed perfectly in the familiar words, “Change and decay in all around I see.” This is an experience which may come to us early or late. Perhaps to most of us it comes most vividly as we are entering middle life. We

have a sense of the insecurity of things. Human beings appear as shadows streaming through the brightness of this fair world from dark to dark. Charles Lamb has given one of the most perfect expressions I know of this sentiment in his lines, “The Old Familiar Faces.” Mr. Lucas, in his excellent notes, says that the poem was written in January, 1798, following, it is suggested, upon a fit of resentment against Charles Lloyd. On Christmas Day, 1797, Lamb wrote the verses beginning :

“I am a widow’d thing now that thou art gone!
Now that thou art gone, my own familiar friend,
Companion, sister, helpmate, counsellor!”

Mary Lamb, after seeming to be on the road to perfect recovery, had a relapse necessitating a return to confinement from the lodging in which her brother had placed her. Lamb was barely twenty-three when he wrote about “The Old Familiar Faces”; so soon had night fallen on his soul.

By mid-life, even if we are more fortunate than most, we have known estrangement and bereavement, and much of the sadness that comes when we think of absent faces and loosened hands. Dean Church, in one of his sermons, speaks of the doors closed where once we were welcome, of the empty chairs where those sat whom we dreamed we could never lose. The sorrow of the closed doors is as

nothing in comparison with the sorrow of the empty chair, and yet it is bitter, and it may be long-lasting. Those of us who have lived long in the same place cannot go into the street without passing one home after another where our welcome was once warm and sure, but now the houses are filled with strangers, and life is darker and colder because it is so.

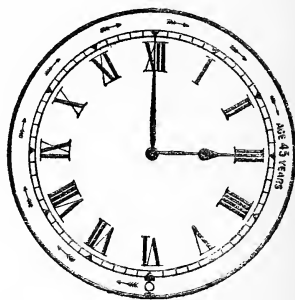
I

On the melancholy of change there is no writer who has spoken more eloquently and with deeper feeling than John Ruskin.

Mr. Frederic Harrison has marked with great acuteness the time when Ruskin's style altered. "When 'Unto This Last' was finally published John Ruskin was forty-three: he had already written the most elaborate and systematic of all his books—those on which his world-wide fame still rests. He had long passed *il mezzo del cammin di nostra vita*—and even the middle of his own long years: his energy, his health, his hopes were not what they had been in his glorious youth and early manhood: his mission became consciously to raise men's moral standard in life, not to raise their sense of the beautiful in Art. The old mariner still held us with his glistening eye, and forced us to listen to his wondrous tale, but he spoke like a man whose voice shook with the memory of all that he had seen and known, over whom the deep

waters had passed. I am one of those who feel that John Ruskin has told us in his second life things more true and more important even than he told us in his first life. But yet I cannot bring myself to hold that, as a magician of words, his later teaching has the mystery and the glory which hung round the honeyed lips of the 'Oxford Graduate.'"

This is true, and it is also true that, even in the midst of Ruskin's passionate rapture for all beautiful things, he had an undying sense of "the subtle, fitful, implacable smiting of the black waves of change." It is possible, I think, to keep our friends till death takes them away, but it is possible only if we make a serious and deliberate and constant effort to keep our friendships in repair.



Charles Lamb thinks that early friendships do not often endure into middle age. "Oh, it is pleasant as it is rare to find the same arm linked in yours at forty which at thirteen helped it to turn over Cicero 'De Amicitia,' or some other tale of antique friendship which the young heart even then was burning to anticipate." This need not be so. If friendship is prized at its true worth, we shall not be left desolate. I cannot

imagine what joy there can be in living when the eyes of others no longer look love into ours. But a very shrewd and experienced observer has said that there are plenty of men on the down-grade of years who own not a single friend for whom they would make a sacrifice, or who would make a sacrifice for them. In friendship, as in love, the test of reality is the readiness to sacrifice—sacrifice of time or exertion, or whatever else. Dr. Johnson preached earnestly on the duty of nourishing affection, and he said that it was more frequently thrown away with levity or lost by negligence than destroyed by injury or violence.

One great support of friendship is the fidelity that takes no heed of the risings and the fallings of life. In his reminiscences of Jowett, Mr. Swinburne says that the Master's friendships were quite independent of calculation. They had a common acquaintance, with an easy amiability of manner, who never failed to worship the rising stars. When he was civil to people, they concluded that he must have heard of some imminent promotion about to befall them. When he was chilly, they knew that in his opinion at least things were going against them. This worthy was called by his acquaintances The Barometer. Swinburne despised him, but liked him, and told this to Jowett. Jowett replied that he "could not understand how you could like a man whom you despised."

But against the death of friends we cannot fortify

ourselves. What that death may mean we may understand from Montaigne's grief over the death of Stephen de la Bœtie: "Menander of old declared him to be happy that had the good fortune to meet with but the shadow of a friend; and doubtless he had good reason to say so, especially if he spoke by experience; for, in good earnest, if I may compare all the rest of my life—though, thanks be to God, I have always passed my time pleasantly enough and at my ease, and, the loss of such a friend excepted, free from any grievous affliction, and in great tranquillity of mind, having been contented with my natural and original conveniences and advantages, without being solicitous after others—if I should compare it all, I say, with the four years I had the happiness to enjoy the sweet society of this excellent man, 'tis nothing but smoke, but an obscure and tedious night. . . . I have only led a sorrowful and languishing life; and the very pleasures that present themselves to me, instead of administering anything of consolation, double my affliction for his loss. We were halves throughout, and to that degree that, methinks, by outliving him, I defraud him of his part. . . . There is no act or imagining of mine wherein I do not miss him. For as he surpassed me by infinite degrees in virtue and all other accomplishments, so he also did in all offices of friendship."

Montaigne's letter to his father on the death of Bœtie is one of the most moving in all literature:

“‘Brother, brother,’ he said to me ; ‘what, won’t you give me room?’ insomuch that he forced me to convince him by reason and say to him that, since he breathed and talked, he had by consequence a place. ‘Yes, yes,’ said he, ‘I have ; but it is not the one I want ; and besides, say what you will, I have no longer a being.’ ‘God will give you a being very soon.’ ‘Would to God, brother, I was there now ; I have longed to be gone these three days past.’ In this distressed state, he often called to me, in order to know whether I was near him. About an hour after, naming me once or twice, and then fetching a deep sigh, he gave up the ghost, about three o’clock on Wednesday morning, the 18th of August, 1563, having lived thirty-two years, nine months and seventeen days.”

One can only say that there is a sadness in the memory of the past and repeat the simple lines :

“Our broken friendships we deplore,
And loves of youth that are no more ;
No after-friendships e’er can raise
The endearments of our early days.”

And yet those who show themselves friendly can always make friends, even to the end of life ; and, since they can, they should.

II

There are blows that strike yet nearer home. Confucius says the three greatest miseries of a man

are to lose in youth his father, in middle age his wife, in old age his son. If we live our term of years, in the course of nature our fathers and mothers must die before us. It is a deep sorrow, but for the most part quiet. Carlyle's tribute to his father in the "Reminiscences" is very beautiful, but I prefer the brief, proud sentences of his letter to Macvey Napier :

"Unexpected occurrences forced me to give up the hope of returning by way of your city. I must hasten home direct into Annandale and make a visit into Edinburgh afterwards. The hand of death has been busy in my circle, as I learn that it has been in yours, painfully reminding us that 'here we have no continuing city.' The venerated Friend that bade me farewell cannot welcome me when I come back. I have now no father in this land of shadows."

The loss of a mother cannot be repaired :

"If only my mother knew
How my heart is hurt within me,
She would take my face in her tender hands
And smooth my cheek as she used to do
In the days that seem so long ago,
When childish tears were quick to flow;
She would smooth my face with her tender hands
If she felt the grief within me."

Thomas Gray, the poet, had a cold temperament and a passionless nature, but he had affections which, when once awakened, were deep, tender, and lasting. On the death of his mother he wrote to

no one, and it was only in the change of his countenance when her name was mentioned years after that his nearest friends learned how faithful was his memory. Writing to Mr. Nicholls on the occasion of the illness of his friend's mother, he tells him that it was not until too late he made the discovery that in one's whole life one can never have but a single mother. "It is thirteen years ago, and seems but yesterday ; and every day I live it sinks deeper into my heart."

Mr. Barrie has said everything in "Margaret Ogilvy": "They knew now that she was dying. She told them to fold up the christening robe, and almost sharply she watched them put it away, and then for some time she talked of the long, lovely life that had been hers, and of Him to Whom she owed it. She said good-bye to them all, and at last turned her face to the side where her best beloved had lain, and for over an hour she prayed. They only caught the words now and again, and the last they heard were 'God' and 'love.' I think God was smiling when He took her to Him, as He had so often smiled at her during those seventy-six years."

A child's death is very often one of the sorrows of which Wendell Holmes has written :

"A great calamity, for instance, is as old as the trilobites an hour after it has happened. It stains backward through all the leaves we have turned over in the book of life, before its blot of tears or

of blood is dry on the page we are turning. For this we seem to have lived; it was foreshadowed in dreams that we leaped out of in the cold sweat of terror; in the dissolving views of dark day-visions; all omens pointed to it; all paths led to it. After the tossing half forgetfulness of the first sleep that follows such an event, it comes upon us afresh, as a surprise, at waking; in a few moments it is old again—old as eternity.

"Did you ever happen to see that most soft-spoken and velvet-handed steam-engine at the Mint? The smooth piston slides backward and forward as a lady might slip her delicate finger in and out of a ring. The engine lays one of its fingers calmly, but firmly, upon a bit of metal; it is a coin now, and will remember that touch, and tell a new race about it, when the date upon it is crusted over with twenty centuries. So it is that a great silent-moving misery puts a new stamp on us in an hour or a moment—as sharp an impression as if it had taken half a lifetime to engrave it."

Shall we not say that there are griefs which we know in an instant will stain forward through all the coming years? Emerson seemed cold to many people; but when his son, "a piece of sunshine well worth my watching from morning to night," died, in 1841, he wrote to Carlyle: "You can never sympathise with me; you can never know how much of me such a young child can take away. A few weeks ago I counted myself a very

rich man, and now the poorest of all." Nearly the last connected words which Emerson spoke on his own deathbed forty-one years after were: "Oh, that beautiful boy!" Jess, in "A Window in Thrums," tells of her Joey. The little lad thought of being a minister, and his first text was to be "Thou God seest me."

"He often said, 'Ye'll be proud o' me, will ye no, mother, when ye see me comin' sailin' along to the pulpit in my gown?' So I would hae been proud o' him, an' I was proud to hear him speakin' o't. 'The other fowk,' he said, 'will be sittin' in their seats wonderin' what my text's to be; but you'll ken, mother, an' you'll turn up to "Thou God seest me," afore I gie oot the chapter.' Ay, but that day he was confined, for all the minister prayed, I found it hard to say, 'Thou God seest me.' It's the text I like best noo, though, an' when Hendry an' Leeby is at the kirk I turn't up often, often in the Bible. I read frae the beginnin' o' the chapter; but when I come to 'Thou God seest me' I stop. Na, it's no'at there's ony rebellion to the Lord in my heart noo, for I ken He was lookin' doon when the cart gaed ower Joey, an' He wanted to tak my laddie to Himself. But juist when I come to 'Thou God seest me,' I let the book lie in my lap, for aince a body's sure o' that they're sure o' all."

But the death of a wife in the midst of the years is the greatest calamity of all, so great that it can

be but touched with reverence and reticence. This grief fell to that true and tender poet, William Barnes. Early in life he saw, for the first time, Julia Miles, "a slight, elegant child of about sixteen," with "blue eyes and wavy brown hair," and the unbidden thought came into his mind, "That shall be my wife." She died when he was in his prime, and to the day of his death, thirty-five years after, every night the word "Giulia" was written like a sigh at the end of each day's entry. So did Dr. Johnson, on whom the same blow fell, write his dead wife's name in his journal—merely the word "Tetty." Such memories are religious. Towards the close of Barnes's life in his own beautiful rectory at Came he spoke to me about his love and his loss, and I shall never forget the intense feeling with which he quoted his own lines :

"When my wife to my hands left
Her few bright keys—a doleful heft."

Then he added, in quivering tones, "Who shall roll us away the stone?"

Brave men can face the dangers and endure the calamities of life, but often they break down under one blow that shatters the heart :

"What can we do, o'er whom the unbeholden
Hangs in a night with which we cannot cope?
What but look sunward, and with faces golden
Speak to each other softly of a hope?"

FROM FORTY TO FORTY-FIVE

Age 41

SAVONAROLA was, in 1493, at the height of his fame as a preacher in Florence.

Martin Luther, on June 13, 1525, married Katharina von Bora. This marked his complete surrender of monastic views, and was at once a scandal to the Roman Catholics and an example to the Reformers.

Edmund Spenser married an Irish girl named Elizabeth on June 11, 1594.

George Chapman, in 1598, began his translation of Homer.

At forty-one Isaac Casaubon produced, in 1600, his edition of Athenæus, which remained by far the most solid of his achievements.

Descartes, in 1637, produced his "Discours de la Méthode."

About 1639 Van Dyck married Lady Mary Ruthven, a beautiful girl in the service of Queen Henrietta of England.

In 1713 Addison's *Cato* was acted at Drury Lane Theatre, and had an almost unequalled success.

Thomas Day, the author of "Sandford and Merton," was killed by a fall from a horse in 1789.

R. B. Sheridan, in 1792, lost his beautiful first wife. She died of consumption in the thirty-eighth year of her age.

Jane Austen died at Winchester, unmarried, in 1817.

William Blackwood, on October 1, 1817, published the first number of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*.

Henry Hallam's great work, "A View of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages," appeared in 1818, and was followed nine years later by his "Constitutional History of England." In 1837-39 appeared the "Introduction to the Literature of Europe in the Fifteenth, Sixteenth, and Seventeenth Centuries." These are the three works on which the fame of Hallam rests.

They at once took a place in English literature which has never been seriously challenged.

Thomas Carlyle finished the manuscript of his "French Revolution," and gave it to his wife, saying that he could tell the world, "you have not had for a hundred years any book that comes more direct and flamingly from the heart of a living man."

At forty-one Dumas *père* wrote "Les Trois Mousquetaires."

Age 42

In 58 B.C. Julius Cæsar began in Gaul his wonderful series of campaigns.

Francis Bacon, in 1603, began to think of the publication of his great work: "On one of these days his imagination, wandering far into the future, showed him in vision the first instalment ready for publication, and set him upon thinking how he should announce it to the world. The result of this meditation he fortunately confided to a sheet of paper, which, being found long after in his cabinet, revealed the secret which it had kept." The following are extracts from this paper:

"Believing that I was born for the service of mankind, and regarding the care of the commonwealth as a kind of common property, which, like the air and the water, belongs to everybody, I set myself to consider in what way mankind might best be served, and what service I was myself best fitted by nature to perform. . . . When I found, however, that my zeal was mistaken for ambition, and my life had already reached the turning-point, and my breaking health reminded me how ill I could afford to be so slow, and I reflected, moreover, that in leaving undone the good that I could do by myself alone, and applying myself to that which could not be done without the help and consent of others, I was by no means discharging the duties that lay upon me, . . . I put all those thoughts aside (thoughts of office, etc.), and (in pursuance of my old determination) betook myself wholly to this work. . . . For myself, my heart is not set upon any of those things which depend upon external accidents. I am not hunting for fame: I have no desire to found a sect, after the fashion of heresiarchs; and to look

for any private gain from such an undertaking as this, I account both ridiculous and base. Enough for me the consciousness of well-deserving, and those real and effectual results with which Fortune itself cannot interfere."

Molière wrote his most famous play, *Tartuffe* in 1664.

Henry Fielding's "Tom Jones" appeared in 1749.

William Paley published his "Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy," 1785, and received £1,000 for the copyright.

Mirabeau died in 1791, "shattered by his various imprisonments and exhausted by vices."

William Cobbett, in 1804, began to take the popular side in politics. This made a great change in his life, for up to that time he had been an ardent Tory, and now he was to become a devoted Radical, with rather indefinite and shifting opinions, but with immense power.

Henry Brougham, in 1820, defended Queen Caroline on her trial with much eloquence and boldness, and gained great popularity in consequence.

The wife of J. G. Lockhart, who was also the daughter of Sir Walter Scott, died on May 19, 1837. Lockhart wrote: "I think no one ever lived a more innocent life, and it is my consolation now to reflect that it was perhaps as happy a life as is often granted to human creatures."

In 1842 Macaulay published the "Lays of Ancient Rome."

Harriet Martineau writes, 1844: "At past forty years of age, I begin to relish life and without drawback. I believe there never was before any time in my life when I should not have been rather glad to lay it down. During this last sunny period, I have not acquired any dread or dislike of death: but I have felt for the first time a keen and unvarying relish of life."

H. E. Manning went over to the Roman Catholic Church, and was received on Passion Sunday, April 6, 1851.

John Lothrop Motley, in 1856, published "The Rise of the Dutch Republic" at his own expense. It met with immediate success, 17,000 copies being sold in the first year.

Albert, Prince Consort, in 1861, not long before his fatal illness, in speaking to the Queen, said: "I do not cling to life. You do; but I set no store by it. If I knew that those I love were well cared for, I should be quite ready to die to-morrow." In the same conversation he added: "I am sure if I had a

severe illness I should give up at once, I should not struggle for life. I have no tenacity of life."

D. G. Rossetti published the first collection of his Poems in 1870.

Among those married at this age were Sir Thomas Bodley, 1587, and John Campbell, afterwards Lord Chancellor, 1821.

Among those who died at this age were Queen Mary of England, in 1558; Van Dyck, in London, on December 9, 1641; Thomas Brown, the Scottish psychologist, in 1820; and A. H. Clough, in 1861.

Age 43

In 1512, the year of the fall of the Republic of Florence, Machiavelli began to write "The Prince," which was not published till 1532—after his death.

—Milton became totally blind early in 1652.

George II. came to the throne in 1727.

Joseph Butler published "The Analogy of Religion" on the last day of February, 1736, and two years later was consecrated Bishop of Bristol.

In 1781 Sir William Herschel discovered the planet Uranus, and at a bound leapt into fame. He made this discovery with a telescope of his own construction.

In 1793 Lady Anne Barnard, author of "Auld Robin Gray," was married.

Sir Walter Scott published "Waverley" anonymously, in 1814. The first seven chapters had been written in 1805.

Towards the end of 1845 Lord George Bentinck, who had become prominent in the Protectionist party in the House of Commons, resolved to devote himself more fully to the public service, and with that object he sold his magnificent stud. This was a great epoch in his life, for, previous to this, his whole energies had been given to the turf, and now he began to rise in Parliament with startling rapidity.

A little before 1848 Sainte-Beuve writes: "There comes a sad moment in life; it is when one feels that one has reached all that one can reasonably hope, that one has acquired all to which one could reasonably pretend. I am at this point. I

have obtained much more than my destiny offered me at first, and I find at the same time that this much is very little. . . . In youth there is a world within us, but as we advance it comes to pass that our thoughts and our sentiments can no longer fill our solitude, or at least no longer charm it. . . . At a certain age if your house is not peopled with children it is filled with manias or vices."

Robert Louis Stevenson wrote to Sidney Colvin, in 1894 : "I know I am at a climacteric for all men who live by their wits, so I do not despair. But the truth is I am pretty nearly useless at literature. . . . Were it not for my health, which made it impossible, I could not find it in my heart to forgive myself that I did not stick to an honest commonplace trade when I was young, which might have now supported me during these ill years. . . . I do not think it possible to have fewer illusions than I. I sometimes wish I had more. They are amusing. But I cannot take myself seriously as an artist; the limitations are so obvious. I did take myself seriously as a workman of old, but my practice has fallen off. I am now an idler and cumberer of the ground; it may be excused to me perhaps by twenty years of industry and ill-health, which has taken the cream off the milk."

Among those who married at this age were Bishop Berkeley, in 1728, and Lord Brougham, in 1821.

Age 44

St. Francis of Assisi, worn out by his many labours, died on October 4, 1226. In twenty-four years after his death his Order numbered 200,000 friars, distributed into twenty-three provinces, and occupying 8,000 monasteries.

Lorenzo de Medici died in 1492, quite cheerfully. He said the only reason he would have wished life prolonged was that he might complete the public library at Florence.

Cardinal Wolsey reached the summit of his power in 1515. Pope Leo X. created him Cardinal, and King Henry VIII. made him Chancellor.

The Duke Francis of Guise was forty-four when he was assassinated by Poltrot de Méré, one of the great political crimes of the sixteenth century.

Mary Queen of Scots was beheaded in 1587.

John Napier, of Merchiston, in 1594, conceived the general principles of logarithms, in developing which the next twenty years of his life were spent.

Francis Bacon published, in 1605, "The Advancement of Learning."

In 1621 Robert Burton published the first edition of the "Anatomy of Melancholy."

Benedict Spinoza died of consumption in 1677.

Sir Isaac Newton presented the first book of his "Principia" to the Royal Society in 1686, and the whole work was published the next year.

Frederick the Great, on August 24, 1756, suddenly crossed the frontier and compelled the Saxon army to surrender. This started the Seven Years' War, in which practically the whole Continent was in arms against him. The issue of this war was that Prussia was regarded as one of the great powers of the Continent, and she took her place in Germany as the rival of Austria.

Goldsmith's play, *She Stoops to Conquer* was acted in 1773.

Thomas Bewick, in 1797, published at Newcastle the first volume of his "History of British Birds." In this book he reached his high-water mark in wood-engraving.

Robert Hall was married in 1808.

William Wordsworth published "The Excursion" in 1814.

R. D. Blackmore published "Lorna Doone" in 1869.

Robert Louis Stevenson died in 1894.

Age 45

Chaucer, born 1340, began to write the "Canterbury Tales" when he was between forty-five and fifty, and died at sixty, leaving them unfinished.

Descartes, in 1641, published his "Meditationes de Primâ Philosophiâ."

In 1671 Madame de Sévigné writes to her daughter: "You ask me, my child, whether I still love life as well as I did. I do not conceal from you that I find it full of poignant afflictions; but I am even more disgusted with death. I consider myself so unfortunate that I have to end with it, that if I could turn back

I would joyfully do so. I am in a position that embarrasses me. I was started in life without my consent, and I must quit it; this weighs on my heart."

In 1768 the Royal Academy was planned and established, and Joshua Reynolds was appointed its first President, and knighted in 1769.

Schiller died in 1805. He said when dying that "many things were now becoming plain and clear to him."

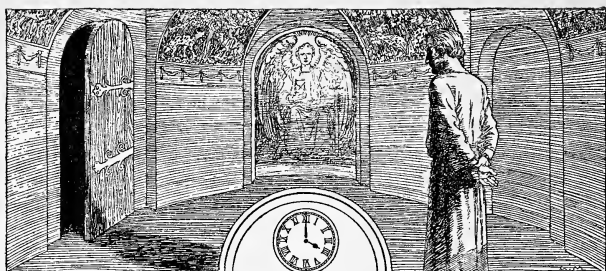
John Stuart Mill was married in 1851. He wrote: "For seven and a half years that blessing was mine; for seven and a half only! I can say nothing which could describe, even in the faintest manner, what that loss was and is. But because I know that she would have wished it, I endeavour to make the best of what life I have left, and to work on for her purposes with such diminished strength as can be derived from thoughts of her, and communion with her memory."

Thackeray wrote from Washington to Mrs. Brookfield, February, 1853: "God bless all there, say I. I wish I was by to be with my dear friends in grief. I know they know how to sympathise (although we are spoiled by the world, we have no hearts you know, etc., etc.; but then it may happen that the high-flown romantic people are wrong, and that we love our friends, as much as they do). I don't pity anybody who leaves the world, not even a fair young girl in her prime; I pity those remaining. On her journey, if it pleases God to send her, depend on it there's no cause for grief—that's but an earthly condition. Out of our stormy life, and brought nearer the Divine light and warmth, there must be a serene climate."

Matthew Arnold wrote, in 1867, after his son's death: "And so this loss comes to me just after my forty-fifth birthday, with so much other 'suffering in the flesh'—the departure of youth, cares of many kinds, an almost painful anxiety about public matters—to remind me that *the time past of our life may suffice us!*—words which have haunted me for the last year or two, and that we 'should no longer live the rest of our time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.' However different the interpretation we put on much of the facts and history of Christianity, we may unite in the bond of this call, which is true for all of us, and for me, above all, how full of meaning and warning!"

John Richard Green, the historian, "died learning," at Mentone, in March, 1883.

A lady said to Dickens: "I can never forgive you, Mr. Dickens, for the death of Nelly in 'The Old Curiosity Shop.'" "You would not have liked her," he said in reply, "to marry a butcher or a baker."



XIII

“DISCONTENTS IN DEVON”: FROM FORTY-FIVE TO FIFTY

> | In these papers I am trying to say something of the greater human experiences. To fit these with precision into any lustrum of life is impossible. I can but make approximations to the normal. In most lives there is something of success and much of failure. In the next chapter I shall write of the sunnier and more prosperous side, and in this of the darker. Perhaps the order might have been reversed. In any case, I think it is true that, when men come to forty-five, they are compelled to consider what they have attained to and the possibilities that lie beyond them.

Who can doubt but that the vast majority are more or less disappointed? They had hoped to do better—much better. The dark side of hope's fiery

column is turned. They are where they do not expect to be, and they see small prospect of betterment. The trouble and the consolation are excellently expressed by Robert Herrick in his lines, “Discontents in Devon” :

“More discontents I never had
Since I was born, than here ;
Where I have been, and still am sad,
In this dull Devonshire :

“Yet justly too I must confess ;
I ne’er invented such
Ennobled numbers for the press,
Than where I loath’d so much.”

Herrick was thirty-eight when he was admitted in 1639 to the living of Dean Prior, near Ashburton, Devon. He had come from gay days in London, and could recall the lyric feasts “presided over by Ben Jonson at the Sun, the Dog, the Triple Tun.” But Devonshire was a weary place to him, and yet he spent some eighteen years there, leaving the county in 1647, when he was fifty-six. He declared that he would never go back to Devonshire till “rocks turned to rivers, rivers turned to men.” London was his birthplace, “a fine town and a gallant city,” and in London he vowed he would spend the rest of his days. But in the course of fortune he returned after fifteen years, and he was in Dean Prior for the last twelve years of his life, and is buried there.

The experience of narrow circumstances, of

limited human intercourse, of the scantiest recognition, is escaped by few, whether they ultimately pass into a larger world or remain where they were placed at first. How often one has heard a sanguine youth speaking of his first place as a stepping-stone ! As time passes, he remains while others move on. But for years he has hopes, till at length a day comes when he recognises that in the crowded world he is not needed, and that the lonely furrow must be ploughed to the end. Others again, after years of waiting, hear their call. They take their place at the centre, and look back.

I

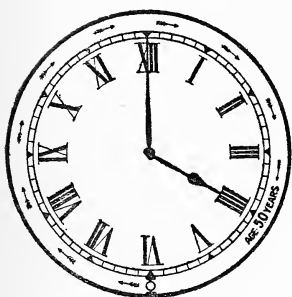
I do not remember any keener or more poignant expression of this experience than is to be found in the writings of that illustrious Hebraist, the late Professor A. B. Davidson. Davidson was a reserved and enigmatic personality, and he scorned what is called popular preaching. But there were always those who hung eagerly on his lips for the sake of what he gave them from his heart of hearts. He knew young men and loved them. He watched their careers with as much sympathy as Jowett, and often with deep disappointment. I make an extract :

“ In the lives of many men there comes a moment like this which had come on Saul. It came, perhaps, to many of the patriarchs. It came to Moses, when debarred from the promised land ;

and it comes to many of us—a moment when it is made clear to us that we are not going to receive that which we had set our heart upon, or make that out of life which we hoped to make, or attain really to that which our circumstances, to set out with, gave promise of—a moment when we are told, as clearly as by a voice from heaven, that we shall not rise to that position in the world, or among men, or in the Church of God, that we had looked forward to; that we shall not lead, or even be a part of, that movement of thought from one degree of truth to a higher, or from one degree of attainment in Christian life to a greater, which we once thought of; that, when that advance is made, no one will think of us in connection with it: or when we feel that evil is in us, which we had struggled against and prayed to have removed, and which we know to be the bar to our true influence, will not yield in this life, and are made conscious that we must stand aside and take a lower place, or, like one who has become lame in the march, fall out of the rank, and let the glorious array pass by us. There comes such a moment to us, I say, as it came to Saul, and as it came to Moses; and though others do not know it, yet God makes known to us the cause of it, what incapacity is in us, or what unadvised word or false step it was, that loses to us the harvest of our hopes. Yet surely even then we are not going to go moaning through the world, or become paralysed and feeble, and let our hands hang down.

Rather let us accept our destiny as what God adjudges to us, and strive to do what we still can, losing ourselves as much as we can in the general thought of God and man, and the great interests of life, in which we shall have some share still, although not that high one which we dreamed of having."

Again Davidson pictures what is often the thought of those who for years have been drearily situated in remote places and crave for their opportunity.



"Are we not people who for long have been walking this way and that way, pursuing all ways that seemed open to us of thought and life, but in every case finding that, whatever way we took, it carried us but a little distance—it suddenly stopped, and there

rose up before us a wall, insurmountable and dead, with no entrance in it, no door, an absolute obstacle to further movement? Before and behind, such walls were around us, insurmountable and dead."

It is perhaps quite true to say that the cure for such fretting and chafing is the realising of our own insignificance. We are where we are because we never had it in us to rise higher. To us has been given the one talent. But this will not cover all the facts. The right men are not in the right place:

that is part of the tragedy of the world. How is a man to bear himself when he is in the wrong place?

He may bear himself bravely and cheerfully, or he may moan and whine.

I take Sydney Smith at Foston as an example of the heroic way, and Thomas Carlyle at Craigenputtock of the not altogether unheroic but fretful and lacerating way.

II

Sydney Smith (1771–1845) was one of the wisest, wittiest, and most brilliant men in the early nineteenth century. His chances in life seemed to be good, and his remarkable qualities made friends for him everywhere and in all circles. There was probably never a man better fitted for society, and, alike in Edinburgh and in London, his sense and his good humour impressed all who met him. But he was on the people's side in politics, and promotion was very slow. He received the living of Foston, near York, valued at £500 a year, and, in the easy way of the time, proposed to draw the revenues and enjoy them in London. But the Clergy Residence Bill was passed, and Sydney had to give up Foston or reside in it. He chose in 1809 to reside and to face his difficulties. Foston had had no resident clergyman since the seventeenth century, and Sydney had to build a parsonage. He heartily faced his difficulties. He set to work to build a parsonage, snug if ugly,

with farm buildings and all complete at the cost of £4,000 of his own money. In his biography may be read the delightful details of his residence there. When he went to Foston he was hardly a young man. Thirty-eight years of his life had gone, and he was to be rector of Foston for some twenty years. But his spirits never seemed to fail. I say "seemed," for there are suggestive touches in Sydney Smith's writings. Thus he says in one place that we are all going to the grave with hearts scarred like a soldier's body. He did not allow his pain to find expression; and, as Professor Saintsbury says in his excellent essay," it is impossible to read his letters without liking him warmly and personally, without seeing that he was not only a man who liked to be comfortable (that is not very rare), that he was not only one who liked others to be comfortable (that is rarer); but one who in every situation in which he was thrown did his utmost to make others as well as himself comfortable (which is rarest of all)." I take the testimony of his wife, who writes to Francis Jeffrey:

" We have been a sad house of invalids here, but we are all cheering up at the prospect of Sydney's return. The other day poor little Douglas was lying on the sofa very unwell, while Saba and I were at dinner; and I said, ' Well, dear little Chuffy, I don't know what is the matter with us both, but we seem very good for nothing ! ' ' Why, mamma,' said Saba, ' I'll tell you what the matter

is : you are so melancholy and so dull because papa is away ; he is so merry that he makes us all gay. A family doesn't prosper, I see, without a papa !' I am much inclined to be of her opinion : and, suspecting that the observation would please him quite as well as that of any of his London flatterers, I despatched it to him the next day."

His daughter Saba, who afterwards became his biographer, comments thus : "The letter is so complete and faithful a family picture, that I have not been able to resist the temptation to insert it. The joyous and joy-giving father, the tender and devoted wife and mother, the happy children, sensible of their happiness, are all placed before us in these few words."

During his time at Foston Sydney never indulged in any pleasures in which his family did not share. Though he contributed to the *Edinburgh Review*, and was much in need of books of reference, he did without them. He hardly added one volume through all his years of poverty to the precious little store he brought down with him from London. When a present of books arrived from some of his kind old friends he was almost childlike in his delight. He read and wrote in his own family circle, in spite of talking and other interruptions. He had thoughts for every one, even for the beasts. "What in the name of wonder," said a visitor, "is that skeleton sort of machine in the middle of your field?" "Oh, that is my universal scratcher, a

framework so contrived that every animal, from a lamb to a bullock, can rub and scratch itself with the greatest facility and luxury." His head servant was his carpenter, and never appeared save on company days. "We were waited on by his usual *corps domestique*—one little girl about fourteen years of age, named, I believe, Mary or Fanny, but invariably called by them Bunch. With the most immovable gravity she stands before him when he gives his orders, the answers to which he makes her repeat verbatim to ensure accuracy."

Sydney Smith maintained his manly independence in writing to the great. He did not conceal the limitations of his position, but smiled on them.

Thus he writes to Jeffrey: "I like my new house very much. It is very comfortable; and, after finishing it, I would not pay sixpence to alter it. But the expense of it will keep me a very poor man, a close prisoner here for my life, and render the education of my children a difficult exercise for me. My situation is one of great solitude; but I preserve myself in a state of cheerfulness and tolerable content, and have a propensity to amuse myself with trifles. I hope I shall write something before I grow old, but I am not certain that I am sufficiently industrious. I am truly glad to hear of your pleasure from your little girl and your château. The haunts of happiness are varied and rather unaccountable, but I have more often seen her among little children, and home firesides,

and country houses, than anywhere else—at least, I think so."

At last, when Sydney was approaching sixty, the preferment to which he justly thought himself entitled came to him. It is a great thing to say that he never showed jealousy of those for whom he had been passed by. It is one chief peril of the neglected that they may be "devoured by jealousy, gnawed by burning teeth, rent by ice-cold claws."

III

I shall not repeat the oft-told tale of Carlyle's time at Craigenputtock, 1828-34—the six years' imprisonment on the Dumfriesshire moors. Doubtless it was a fruitful time for him, and a time when he bore poverty, mortification, and disappointment rather than be untrue to that which was best within him. But Carlyle complained too much, and cared too little for his fellow-sufferers. He spoke of the "lying draggle-tails of byre-women, and peat-moss, and isolation, and exasperation, and confusion." Life, he said, "here is a kind of life-in-death, or rather, one might say, a not being born: one sits as in the belly of some Trojan horse, weather-screened but pining, inactive, neck and heels crushed together. Let us burst it in the name of God. Let us take such an existence as He will give us, working where work is to be found while it is called to-day. A strange shiver

runs through every nerve of me when I think of taking that plunge ; yet also a kind of sacred faith, sweet after the dreary vacuity of soul I have through long seasons lived in as under an eclipsing shadow."

Mrs. Carlyle, also, was unhappy. Froude must always be read with caution, but on this point all the evidence confirms him. "Her life there, to begin with, had been a life of menial drudgery, unsolaced (for she could have endured and even enjoyed mere hardship) by more than an occasional word of encouragement, or sympathy, or compassion from her husband. To him it seemed perfectly natural that what his mother did at Scotsbrig his wife should do for him. Every household duty fell upon her, either directly or in supplying the shortcomings of a Scotch maid-of-all-work. She had to cook, to sew, to scour, to clean, to gallop down alone to Dumfries if anything was wanted to keep the house ; and even on occasion to milk the cows." She never recovered the strain of these six years. The loneliness of Craigenputtock was dreadful to her, and she saw very little of her husband. "For months together, especially after Alick Carlyle had gone, they never saw the face of guest or passing stranger. So still the moors were that she could hear the sheep nibbling the grass a quarter of a mile off. For the many weeks when the snow was on the ground she could not stir beyond the garden, or even beyond her door. She

had no great thoughts, as Carlyle had, to occupy her with the administration of the universe. He had deranged the faith in which she had been brought up, but he did not inoculate her with his own, and a dull gloom, sinking at last to apathy, fell upon her spirits.” It was not till Mrs. Carlyle was dead that her husband saw the meaning of it all.

IV

Even among strong spirits at this period of life the escape by death is often coveted. In the letters of Melanchthon we find more than one striking phrase, “*Duriter servio et sæpe de fuga cogito*” (I serve in hardness and often think of flight). Melanchthon was then forty-six. But this was not from the absence of work, but rather from its excess, from that pressure of great affairs which sometimes crushes a man in mid-career, but which, when conquered, seems to be borne easily and lightly.

V

I have two favourite quotations on reconciliation with circumstance. There is a sombre grandeur in the words of T. H. Green :

“Our final repose does not arise from unconsciousness of the law, but from reconciliation with it. The solid walls of circumstance which shut in our energies stand firm as ever ; but, instead of

chafing against them, we see them reflecting the brightness of our own Deliverer's coming."

And Robert Browning says :

"Somewhat narrow, somewhat slow,
Used to seem the ways, the walking : narrow ways are
well to tread
When there's moss beneath the footsteps, honeysuckle
overhead."

We may come to look at the familiar, cramped, but not unloved surroundings and say : "I began with tremendous ambitions, hopes, intentions. I was going to set the world afire ; I was going to build such wonders as never man beheld. Well, it wasn't in me, that's all. I had to face my limitations, and to work on from them."

FROM FORTY-FIVE TO FIFTY

Age 46

ON March 20, 1563, John Foxe's "Acts and Monuments" was published in English.

In March, 1764, Winckelmann published his epoch-making "History of Ancient Art."

Immanuel Kant, in 1770, after fifteen years' teaching as a private lecturer in the University of Königsberg, was at last appointed to the chair of logic and metaphysics.

John Howard was named High Sheriff for Bedfordshire in 1772, and the characteristic work of his life began. He entered the prisons, and began his immortal undertaking of prison reform.

1815 was one of the most eventful years in the crowded life of Napoleon. On February 20 he was in banishment in Elba, and set sail thence, and on March 20 entered Paris in triumph. On June 18 he was defeated at Waterloo, being overcome with the most unaccountable sleepiness and inattention during crises of the fight. On October 15 he arrived at St. Helena to spend the rest of his days in banishment.

The Duke of Wellington, who was born in the same year as Napoleon, won the battle of Waterloo.

Hegel's "Logic," in which his system was for the first time presented in what was its ultimate shape, appeared complete in 1816, when he was forty-six; his "Philosophy of Right" followed in 1821. Between 1823 and 1827 at Berlin his activity reached its maximum. "Hegel himself in his class-room was neither imposing nor fascinating. You saw a plain, old-fashioned face, without life or lustre—a figure which had never looked young, and was now bent and prematurely aged; the furrowed face bore witness to concentrated thought."

Nathaniel Hawthorne published "The Scarlet Letter" in 1850, when he was forty-six, "The House of the Seven Gables" in 1851, and "The Blithedale Romance" in 1852. He flowered late, and his permanent work was all accomplished in a short time.

John Lawrence, in 1857, disarmed the mutineers in the Punjab, raised an army of 59,000 men, and captured Delhi from the rebels after a siege of over three months.

Charles Dickens separated from his wife in 1858.

When A. P. Stanley was forty-six his mother died, and soon after he met Lady Augusta Bruce, whom he married in 1863, immediately before his investiture as Dean of Westminster. He writes: "I have often thought that marriage is the only event in modern life which corresponds to what baptism was in the ancient Church—a second birth, a new creation, old things passing away, all things becoming new. I feel as if this double move must indeed be the crisis of my life, in which I must either be extinguished by the greatness of the event, or be made more useful to my Church and country than I have ever been before."

Among those who died at this age were: Edward the Black Prince, 1376; Savonarola, who was put to death in Florence, in 1498; John Fletcher, 1625; Alfred de Musset, 1857.

Age 47

The first edition of Montaigne's Essays appeared in 1580.

Richard Baxter, in 1662, refused to submit to the Act of Uniformity, and, bidding farewell to the Church of England, retired to Acton, in Middlesex. In the same year he married Miss Charlton.

Le Sage published the first two volumes of "Gil Blas" in 1715.

Admiral Anson returned, in 1744, from his voyage round the world, having inflicted much damage on the Spaniards, and captured treasure to the amount of half a million.

Nelson fell in the battle of Trafalgar, October 21, 1805. He died exclaiming, "I have done my duty; I thank God for it."

Among those who died at forty-seven were Edmund Spenser, in 1599, for lack of bread, in King Street, Westminster. He

refused "twenty pieces sent him by my lord of Essex, saying that he had no time to spend them"; Isaac Barrow, 1677; and John Gay, the poet, 1732. Johnson says: "The letter which brought an account of his death to Swift was laid by for some days unopened, because when he received it he was impressed with the presumption of some misfortune." James Thomson, the author of "The Seasons," died in 1748. Henry Fielding, at Lisbon, 1754; Sir John Moore, at Coruña, 1809; Professor William Robertson Smith, in 1894.

Thomas Arnold died in 1842. In the last entry in his Diary he wrote: "The day after to-morrow is my birthday, if I am permitted to live to see it—my forty-seventh birthday since my birth. How large a portion of my life on earth is already passed. And then—what is to follow this life? How visibly my outward work seems contracting and softening away into the gentler employments of old age. In one sense how nearly can I now say 'vixi.' And I thank God that, as far as ambition is concerned, it is, I trust fully mortified; I have no desire other than to step back from my present place in the world, and not to rise to a higher. Still there are works which, with God's permission, I would do before the night cometh." The day after writing these words he suddenly died.

Age 48

After incredible difficulties and disappointments Bernard Palissy produced a white enamel in 1557, under the following circumstances: "God willed that when I had begun to lose my courage, and was gone for the last time to a glass furnace, having a man with me carrying more than three hundred kinds of trial pieces (of pottery covered with different chemicals), there was one among those pieces which was melted within four hours after it had been placed in the furnace, which on trial turned out white and polished, in a way that caused me such joy as made me think I was become a new creature." This was a great crisis in his life, as it determined him to go on with his experiments, but to what misery these fresh experiments exposed him is seen in the following confession: "Having covered the new pieces with said enamel, I put them into the furnace, keeping

the fire still at its height ; but thereupon occurred to me a new misfortune, which caused great mortification, namely, that the wood having failed me, I was forced to burn the palings which maintained the boundaries of my garden, which being burned also, I was forced to burn the tables and the flooring of my house, to cause the melting of the second composition." His wife appealed to the neighbours, and Palissy, being thought mad, was reduced to great misery.

Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, was brought to the scaffold in 1641. As he began to disrobe, he said : " I thank God I am no more afraid of death, nor daunted with any discouragements arising from any fears, but do as cheerfully put off my doublet at this time as ever I did when I went to bed."

Descartes, in 1644, produced his "*Principia Philosophiæ*."

1692 was William Penn's year of misfortune. His wife died. He was stripped of his title to the government of Pennsylvania, and this meant his ruin, as his estates in England had been much injured by corrupt overseers.

William Bentinck, Earl of Portland, in July 1697, entered upon the chief diplomatic task of his life, and by the following October the Peace of Ryswyk was concluded.

Fénelon's "*Télémaque*," in 1699, was surreptitiously published in Holland.

Ephraim Chambers published, in 1728, the first edition of his "*Cyclopædia*," a French translation of which aroused Diderot to project his "*Encyclopédie*" on a larger scale.

In 1776 Captain Cook set out on his last voyage.

Cowper published the Olney hymns.

Cuvier published, in 1817, his great work, "*Le Règne Animal*," in four volumes.

In 1819 Sir Walter Scott was so ill that he summoned his children to bid them farewell. After speaking a few words of advice to each, he added : " For myself, I am unconscious of ever having done any man an injury, or omitted any fair opportunity of doing any man a benefit ; I well know that no human life can appear otherwise than mean and filthy in the eyes of God : but I rely on the merits and intercession of our Redeemer." He fell into a deep sleep, and when he awoke the crisis was over. This was the year "*Ivanhoe*" was published and he reached his high-water mark.

Charles Lamb was forty-eight when the "Essays of Elia" were published in collected form.

Thiers published in 1845 the first volume of his chief work, "L'Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire," which occupied twenty volumes and was completed in 1862.

T. B. Macaulay published the first two volumes of his "History of England" in 1848.

Until the year 1857 Oliver Wendell Holmes had no reputation outside a small and critical New England circle. Then he began "The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table" in the *Atlantic Monthly*. "At forty-eight, when everything begins to pall and men doubt whether the world holds any more of delight, he woke one day to find himself not simply famous, but an object of affection to all who speak our tongue."

J. W. Colenso, Bishop of Natal, published in 1862 the first volumes of "The Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua Critically Examined."

Among those who died at forty-eight were William Shenstone, 1763, and Richard Porson, 1808. Charles I. was beheaded on January 29, 1649.

Age 49

Erasmus published in 1516 the first edition of his Greek Testament.

Rabelais brought out "The History of Gargantua" in 1532.

Lord Clive died by his own hand in 1774.

Spencer Perceval was assassinated in 1812.

Walter Scott was created a baronet in 1820.

The last volume of Sir Archibald Alison's "History of Europe during the French Revolution" appeared in June, 1842. "I went up to Mrs. Alison to call her down to witness the conclusion, and she saw the last words of the work written, and signed her name on the margin. It would be affectation to conceal that I felt deep emotion at this event."

George Grote, in 1843, retired from the banking house of Prescott, Grote & Co. after belonging to that firm for nearly thirty years. He was so anxious to devote his time and faculties to his *magnum opus* on "The History of Greece" that all other

considerations, pecuniary ones included, became secondary in his wife's view, as in his own, to this main object.

W. H. Prescott, the historian, wrote on May 4, 1845: "My forty-ninth birthday and my twenty-fifth wedding day. . . . I have many intimations that I am now getting on the shady side of the hill, and as I go down the shadows will grow longer and longer and darker. My life has been pretty much on the sunny side, for I am indebted to a singularly fortunate position in life; to inestimable parents, who both, until a few months since, were preserved to me in health of mind and body; a wife who has shared my few troubles, real and imaginary, and my many blessings with the sympathy of another self; a cheerful temper, in spite of some drawbacks on the score of health; and easy circumstances, which have enabled me to consult my own inclinations in the direction and amount of my studies."

Sara Coleridge died in 1852 when she was forty-nine.

On June 18, 1858, Charles Darwin received a letter from Alfred Wallace, "containing the astounding news that the theory he had been elaborating during twenty years had been suddenly arrived at by Mr. Wallace in the East. . . . I would far rather burn my whole book than that he or any other man should think that I had behaved in a paltry spirit."

John Brown published "Rab and His Friends" in 1859.

Age 50

In 1541 Ignatius Loyola was made the first General of the Jesuit Order, and attained the summit of his ambition.

William Harvey began as early as 1615 to speak of his new views on the action of the heart and the circulation of the blood, but it was not till 1628, when he was fifty, that his great work, "*Exercitatio Anatomica de Motu Cordis et Sanguinis*," expounding his theory and discovery, was published.

Edward Gibbon writes: "It was on the day, or rather the night, of the twenty-seventh of June, 1787, between the hours of eleven and twelve, that I wrote the last lines of the last page in a summer-house in my garden [at Lausanne]. After laying down my pen I

took several turns in a covered walk of acacias, which commands a prospect of the country, the lake, and the mountains. I will not dissemble the first emotions of joy on recovery of my freedom, and perhaps on the establishment of my fame. But my pride was soon humbled, and a sober melancholy was spread over my mind, by the idea that I had taken an everlasting leave of an old and agreeable companion, and that, whatever might be the future fate of my history, the life of the historian must be short and precarious." The following is Gibbon's summing-up of his memoirs, when, as he said, "the general probability is about three to one that a new-born infant will not live to complete his fiftieth year. I have now passed that age." . . .

Boswell's "Life of Johnson" appeared on May 16, 1791, in two quarto volumes, sold at ten guineas.

H. G. Bohn started, in 1846, his Standard Library, which proved an immense success, and gave him a unique position among the publishers of his time.

The first edition of Edward Fitzgerald's "Omar Khayyám" came out in 1859, without gaining any immediate recognition. When writing to Professor Cowell, he says: "Ten years ago I might have been vexed to see you striding along in Sanskrit and Persian so fast; reading so much; remembering all; writing about it so well. But now I am glad to see any man do anything well; and I know it is my vocation to stand and wait and know within myself whether it is done well."

Henriette Renan, the elder sister who devoted herself to her brother Ernest, and went with him to Syria, where he wrote his "Vie de Jésus," died of fever at Byblos, September 24, 1861, at the age of fifty. There is much pathos in that final scene described by her brother when they were both lying ill a few feet from one another, both unconscious, and she taking her "endlesse leave,"

"Without a sad look or a solemn teare,"

from the brother for whom she had sacrificed everything—even a happy marriage—in life. The "Vie de Jésus" is dedicated *A l'âme pure de ma Sœur Henriette*. Constantly in the letters and in the memoir Ernest talks of her and addresses her by the exquisite French term of endearment, *mon amie*, and in truth

there are few sisters of whom Christina Rossetti's fine lines can so truly be said as of Henriette Renan :

“There is no friend like a sister
In calm or stormy weather,
To cheer one on the tedious way,
To fetch one if one goes astray,
To lift one if one totters down,
To strengthen whilst one stands.”

Tolstoi in 1878 resolved to devote himself to the problems of life, and gradually resigned all privileges of rank.

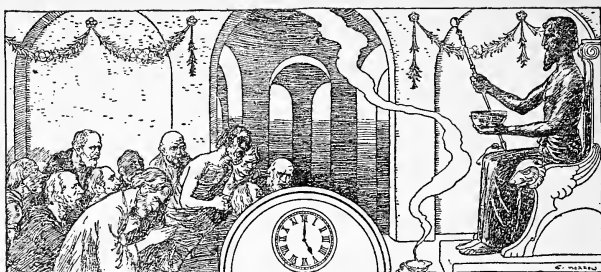
Among others who died at fifty were Catharine of Aragon, in 1536 ; Winckelmann, murdered in 1768 ; Tobias Smollett, in 1771 ; Captain Cook, killed in 1779 ; Lavoisier, guillotined in 1794 ; Sir Humphry Davy, in 1829, at Geneva, from an attack of paralysis ; Count Cavour, in 1861. His last words were, “Frate, frate, libera chiesa in libero stato” (brother, brother, free church in free state). Sydney Dobell, in 1874.

Matthew Browne says : “The best minds have many maturities. Milton was precocious, and yet he sat down to write ‘Paradise Lost’ at fifty.”

STRUGGLES IN MID LIFE

There is a very fine letter of Nathaniel Hawthorne to Hillard, sending back the sum with interest which was given him by unknown friends about four years before. “I have always hoped and intended to do this, from the first moment when I made up my mind to accept the money. It would not have been right to speak of this purpose before it was in my power to accomplish it ; but it has never been out of my mind for a single day, nor hardly, I think, for a single working hour. We are not rich, nor are we ever likely to be ; but the miserable pinch is over. This act of kindness did me an unspeakable amount of good ; for it came when I most needed to be assured that anybody thought it worth while to keep me from sinking. And it did me even greater good than this, in making me sensible of the need of

sterner efforts than my former ones, in order to establish a right for myself to live and be comfortable. For it is my creed (and was so even at the wretched time) that a man has no claim upon his fellow creatures, beyond bread and water, and a grave, unless he can win it by his own strength or skill. But so much the kinder were those unknown friends, whom I thank again with all my heart." Hawthorne was forty-six when he accepted the loan, and forty-nine when he returned it.



XIV

“WINNA SILLER DO’T?”—FROM FIFTY TO FIFTY-FIVE

WHEN the stunning news of Effie Deans’s accusation fell upon old Davie Deans, who had in his early youth resisted the brow of military and civil tyranny, he “fell extended and senseless on his own hearth.” All hastened round him with their appropriate phrases of consolation—the laird with his purse, Jeanie with burnt feathers and strong waters, and the women with their exhortations. “Davie—winna siller do’t?” insinuated the laird, proffering his green purse, which was full of guineas.

The decade between fifty and sixty is often the time of life’s greatest prosperity, and sometimes of its greatest calamity. In dealing with the lustrum from fifty to fifty-five, I bear in mind the observation of an experienced friend who said to me, “It is at fifty that a man generally begins

to make money.” In outwardly successful lives the preliminary difficulties are over, the period of stability has begun, the energies are not sensibly weakened, and there is no thought of life’s decline and fall. I find it a general opinion that fifty is middle age. You see the flourishing man of fifty in the best of health, with his investments increasing, with a certain air of condescension, and a slight convexity of person.

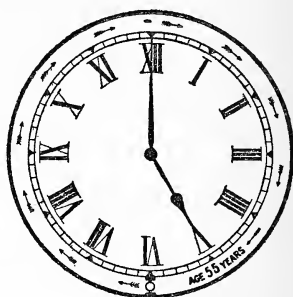
Mr. Hewlett describes one such in his book, “Open Country”: “The name of Thomas Welbore Percival was soundly respected in the City of London. It stood for a turnover of £15,000 and a private income of at least £6,000 a year. It centred in the person of a rosy-gilled, full-waist-coated gentleman of middle life—Mr. Percival was fifty-five and admitted it—to whom a joke was dear, and not less dear because its scope and measurements were accurately known. When Mr. Percival came into Lomax’s bank he said, ‘Morning, Wilkins — growing weather!’ to the grey-whiskered cashier, and handed over his slip of green paper—a glance at the back was the only formula. Then came, ‘How will you take it, Mr. Percival?’ And Wilkins had his bundle of notes out and his finger wet before he so much as looked at the figures. Mr. Percival’s invariable reply was, ‘How can I get it, my boy? Honestly, if possible, in these days.’ Such old customs died hard.”

I have an anonymous essay on the subject, written evidently by a man with whom things had gone well. He notes that the old men treat him respectfully. Old men rarely consult or trust young men. Nothing under five-and-forty has any real chance with them, and even that period of life has about it a flavour of youth that is not quite acceptable. Young men begin to be quiet in the presence of those who are comfortably growing old. They are asked to take responsible positions, high ceremonial functions, the foremost places in debate, the authority of management, and the like; they are conscious of cheeriness of tone and youth of manner; they are capable of great and sustained exertion; they sympathise with the amusements of young people, and it does not occur to them that they are ageing. In that ideal period of life time seems almost to stand still; the daily routine is gone through without strain. New tasks are undertaken and new responsibilities are incurred with a satisfactory consciousness of power. The burden of work is thrown off easily. This happy man observes that he gives orders when he used to receive instructions; that others desire his good opinion as he once desired the friendliness of those who have long passed out of sight. An unconscious air of authority is assumed. More difficult speculations, larger plans, new markets—these take up the working hours. The thought of the downward journey hardly enters the mind. There is as yet

no chill in the air, no vision of the great folds and banks of dense grey cloud. The time has not yet come when failures are accepted as irretrievable. Cheerful, steady, sanguine, such men seem to renew their youth, and to live two lives in one. They have knowledge and experience and wealth, and perhaps they best do the work of the world. At any rate, they think so, and the younger men must obey them.

I

I am thinking chiefly about the accumulation of wealth. A very acute historian says that a reaction against asceticism has been carried on in England ever since 1852. From believing luxury an evil in itself, people have come round to consider it a good. Great wealth now gives so much, so much even of intellectual enjoyment, so much freedom, variety, and pleasure to life, that even wise men begin to hunger for it, and to postpone to its acquisition the efforts which alone can advance the world. But the moralist points out the enervating effect of luxury, the way in which it loosens the bond of the mind, and especially the disturbance it creates as to the true objects of life and living. In the Second Empire



human beings in Paris seemed to be lost in their own surroundings, in things which were not themselves but only the clothing of themselves. All the nobler elements of life were absorbed and stifled. To rise was to have rich things; to shine was to have the richest things; to succeed was to have immensely rich things; and to fail was not to get them.

Perhaps this corruption was, until the last twenty years, not so prevalent in our country as in some others. Meredith Townsend used to say that the English people had no respect for thrift; they considered it the mark of a mean and contracted character. But they objected equally to extravagances, and in his judgment they objected to certain expenditures which resulted from wise and deliberate foresight.

“Sixpences smooth life, and to the nervous organisations bred in our cities life needs smoothing. Nobody is ever ruined in candle-ends, and the effort to keep them only ensures a discontented and therefore a spasmodically expensive household. No form of wastefulness strikes some men so much as the wastefulness of silver in cab-hire, in petty gifts, in minute purchases, and no income seems to exempt those who practise it from the charge of extravagance. Nevertheless, it is often quite certain that a waste of half-a-crown a day—£40 a year—will increase a man’s power of making the best of himself; of earning, if it is to be put in that

way, more than twice the sum expended in things yielding a visible return. It is right to save temper, even at the expense of cash. Collectors, for example, even if it be of old china, are very rarely ruined. We have known a man who could not eat the mass of half-baked flour which it pleases Englishmen to consider bread condemned for extravagance because he peeled the loaf, at a cost of about a pound a year, while his health was worth a pound an hour ; and have heard serious reprobation of another because he had a fancy for taking in two newspapers instead of one. He was extravagant, and that was enough, and he might, as far as his acquaintance were concerned, almost as well have been called a drunkard, or a profligate, or a blasphemer. The English people is, we believe, the only one in the world which considers thrift discreditable, which attaches opprobrious epithets to carefulness in expenditure, and regards foresight against wastry with something of moral as well as intellectual disdain. It is also the only one which denounces extravagance not as a folly, but as a vice, as a habit showing defect of conscience as well as deficiency of judgment. This feeling has a marvellous effect in limiting the freedom of individual action. In New England, as Mrs. Beecher Stowe has told us, it is so powerful that neighbours will sharply remonstrate against what the Scotch call ‘wasting the mercies,’ will sit in committee and decide whether gilt salt-spoons are ‘consistent.’ ”

It used to be said that thrift was the characteristic of the Scottish character. No doubt, for the Scottish people were during nearly all their history very poor. They struggled hard for the barest livelihood. They were independent and proud, and they hoarded the "baubee" against their time of need. "Ca' canny and flee laigh" was a favourite maxim.

II

Between January 1863, and August 1872, the *Illustrated London News* gave particulars about the wills of ten persons who expired in Great Britain within the decade leaving more than a million, fifty-three leaving more than half a million, and 161 leaving more than a quarter of a million sterling apiece. These fortunes, of course, were exclusive altogether of fortunes still more numerous and vast invested in land, and they were very considerably under-stated in extent and number. No doubt a comparison of those figures with the figures of the last decade would show an amazing growth. But it is in America that the millionaire thrives. It is estimated that there are 20,000 millionaires in New York alone. There must be very many scattered over the huge territory, and the wealth in their hands seems to increase continually. In his novel, "The Metropolis," Mr. Upton Sinclair gave an appalling picture of the social life of the very rich in America. The one human quality that seemed to survive was

a kind of careless good nature. But Mr. Sinclair's picture cannot conceivably be true, for a society without higher elements than any depicted by him would perish in a debasement of animalism.

An American millionaire, Mr. Harriman, the railway king, died recently, after great suffering, at the age of sixty-one. In his youth he felt the pinch of poverty, but before he died he was the greatest railway magnate in the country. He held partial or dominating interests in 72,795 miles of railway, representing over five billions in stocks and bonds, and his total wealth was estimated at more than twenty million pounds. The religious journals commented on his career with reserve. They admitted that he was daring, relentless, cunning, a master strategist, keeping always his own counsel and unscrupulous as to the means which promised success. His benefactions were not numerous, and he could throw down a friend if necessary, if that friend stood in his way. He was a law to himself, and when he resorted to war he “inflicted damage on the immediate enemy and elsewhere.” It is mentioned, in extenuation, that he was a regular attendant at the Protestant Episcopal Church, and frequently within the last few years conquered the intense pain of his infirmities to go to church. He wrote a letter to those in his employment urging them to do the same. “Fair-weather Christians,” he said, “are of no more use in a community than the same sort of

labourer, milkman, dairyman, farmer, carpenter, blacksmith, railroad man, or any kind of fair-weather man." The summing up is, "The physicians and surgeons of two continents could not save him. His body, that wonderful battery of force, endurance, and expression, is untenanted."

III

Many millionaires in the United States and elsewhere have been nobly charitable. But I prefer to read about the millionaires of Arabia as they are depicted in "The Arabian Nights." These stories are in a manner religious. A wind of thought blows through them and occasionally the story is lost in the moral. The moral is the evanescence of all things in time and the eternity of the God who does not pass. I quote the inscription written over the grave, in the citadel of the City of Brass, of the mighty queen who tells her experience of the fugitive splendour of mortality and the implacable and inscrutable forces of nature: "O thou who arrivest at this place, be admonished by the misfortunes and calamities that thou beholdest, and be not deceived by the world and its beauty, and its falsity and calumny, and its fallacy and finery; for it is a flatterer, a cheat, a traitor." Then think of the fine and faithful generosity of the Arabian millionaires in the way of conducting business. When Sindbad,

after his first voyage, found a ship with his packages and asked them from the captain, the captain embraced Sindbad and said : “Heaven be praised that you have survived so great a danger ; I cannot express the pleasure I feel on this occasion. Here are your goods ; take them, for they are yours, and do with them what you please.” “I thanked him and praised him for his honourable conduct, begged him, by way of recompense, to accept part of my recovered merchandise, which, however, he persisted in refusing.” What perfect gentlemen these men were ! When Sindbad went back to the Sultan of Serendib on his last voyage, “the prince immediately recognised me, and evinced great joy at my return. ‘Welcome, Sindbad,’ said he. ‘I assure you I have often thought of you since your departure. Blessed be this day in which I see you again.’”

Another beautiful trait in the Arabian millionaires was their constant sense of duty to the poor. When Hindbad, the porter in Bagdad, contrasted the enviable situation of Sindbad with his own, which was so deplorable, he exclaimed in a loud voice, “Almighty Creator of all things, be pleased to consider the difference between Sindbad and myself.” The servant of Sindbad appears, and calls him. Sindbad relates to the porter the story of his adventures in seven nights. Each night a purse containing a hundred sequins is given to Hindbad. In the end Sindbad admits him to his

friendship, and tells him to quit the profession of a porter and continue to eat at his table. Well has it been said that a breath of wisdom blows through "The Arabian Nights," through all that jungle of growths, fair and foul, grand trees and poisonous creepers.

IV

To all but a very few the talk about millionaires and their luxuries is like a fairy-tale. They can at best hope to earn a decent income while they are working, and to make some provision for the time to come ; and as yet the proportion of those in this favoured country who leave anything to speak of is very small. It is miserable to spend the whole energy of life in the effort to create a great fortune. Meanness is one of the most degrading of vices. Nothing kills friendship like it ; nothing eats out the best in the soul as avarice does. But I confess to a very strong sympathy with those who desire to provide for their own day of need and to leave those who have loved and trusted them with a shelter from the storm.

When Carlyle was offered a baronetcy and a pension by Lord Beaconsfield he was able to say, in his letter of refusal, that he did not need the money—"Thank God, and those who have gone before." The careful Haddington doctor who saved enough to buy the little estate of

Craigienputtock made life possible for Carlyle. How many little peaceful homes are unroofed when a bank breaks! There is no cruelty like the cruelty of pecuniary crime. Such crime is much worse than murder, for the suffering it inflicts in its long duration is terrible to think of. An Anglo-Indian, after forty years of honourable labour, returns to England with a competency, to be swindled in the first month out of the whole by a rascally agent, and to be for another quarter of a century a poverty-stricken pensioner on the charity of a friend. We may measure the value of a little competency by what follows on its loss. Charles Reade, in his novel, "Hard Cash," describes what followed the fall of a bank, a fall resulting from the banker's habitual theft of his clients' securities for purposes of speculation. "Turned an atheist and burned the family Bible before his watching wife and terrified children and gaping servant girl, Mr. Williams, a Sunday-school teacher, known hitherto only as a mild, respectable man and teetotaler, and a good parent and husband. He did not take to drinking, but he did to cursing, and forbad his own flesh and blood ever to enter a church again. This man became an outcast, shunned by all."

"Three elderly sisters, the Misses Lumley, well born and bred, lived together on their funds, which, small singly, united made a decent competence. Two of them had refused marriage in early life, for

fear the third should fall into less tender hands than theirs. For Miss Blanche Lumley was a cripple ; disorder of the spine had robbed her of the power to walk, or even stand upright, leaving her two active little hands and a heart as angelic as we are likely to see here on éarth. She died of pity for her sisters' fate."

FROM FIFTY TO FIFTY-FIVE

Age 51

IN 49 B.C. Julius Cæsar crossed the Rubicon.

It was probably in 1265 that Roger Bacon, encouraged by Pope Clement IV., began to write his "Opus Majus," at once the *Encyclopædia* and the *Organon* of the thirteenth century.

In 1529 Sir Thomas More was made Lord Chancellor of England in succession to Wolsey.

Samuel Butler, in 1663, published the first part of "Hudibras," which achieved the widest popularity.

Samuel Richardson published, in 1740, the first part of "Pamela."

On December 23, 1783, on the victorious conclusion of the war with Great Britain, George Washington resigned his commission as Commander-in-Chief of the American troops.

In November 1860 Abraham Lincoln was for the first time elected President of the United States.

Among the deaths at this age were : William the Silent, Prince of Orange, who was assassinated by Balthasar Gérard. The Prince had been showing signs of age, in consequence of his tremendous burdens, but his physicians said that at the time of his death he was thoroughly healthy, and might have lived many years ; Tasso, 1595 ; Molière, in Paris, 1673 ; William III. of England, 1702 ; Madame de Staël, 1817 ; Napoleon I., at St. Helena, 1821 ; Balzac, 1850 ; J. E. Cairnes, Political Economist, 1875 ; Walter Bagehot, 1877 ; Henry Fawcett, the blind Postmaster-General and Economist, 1884.

Age 52

Cardinal Beaton was murdered at St. Andrews, 1546.

Beethoven, in 1822, after a germination of three years, produced his Mass in D.

Henry Brougham became Lord Chancellor in November, 1830.

George Grote published the first two volumes of his "History of Greece," 1846.

At this age there died: Shakespeare, 1616; Francis Quarles, 1644, who left a widow and eighteen children; Peter the Great, 1725; Lessing, 1781; William Hazlitt, 1830 (his last words were, "Well, I've had a happy life"); Hartley Coleridge, 1849; Thackeray, 1863; General Gordon, 1885; and John Davidson, 1909.

Age 53

Gaspard de Coligny was in his fifty-fourth year when he was murdered in August, 1572—the first victim of the St. Bartholomew.

Thomas Fuller died, 1661, crying out for his pen and ink to the last.

Adam Smith published his "Wealth of Nations," 1776.

In 1785 William Cowper published "The Task."

Age 54

Demosthenes, in 330 B.C., made a splendid defence of his past policy in the greatest oration of the old world, his speech on the Crown.

In 1532 Sir Thomas More resigned the Lord Chancellorship. This was one of the most joyous days in his life. "He immediately recovered his hilarity and love of jest, and was himself again."

Bossuet, in May, 1681, became Bishop of Meaux, and seldom preached afterwards.

John Churchill, first Duke of Marlborough, won the battle of Blenheim in 1704.

George I. succeeded to the British throne in 1714.

Lord William Cavendish Bentinck, in July, 1828, assumed office as Governor-General of Bengal, and thus began his career in India which produced so many notable results.

Among those who died at fifty-four were: Scipio (Africanus Major) in 183 B.C.; John Calvin in 1564; Charles II. of England in 1685; James Boswell in 1795; and Eugène Sue in 1859.

Age 55

St. Bernard, in 1146, at the Council of Vézelay, began to preach the second crusade.

Robert Bruce died in his fifty-sixth year (1329). Prof. Hume Brown says : "In the conditions in which men then lived, this was in reality an advanced age. So thoroughly had he done his work that not even the weakness of his immediate successors could undo it. In view of the work he accomplished it may be confidently said that he was the greatest king that ever sat on the Scottish throne."

Charles V., Emperor of Germany, carried out the purpose he had long cherished in his mind, and abdicated in 1555.

Handel, in 1740, when he was fifty-five years of age, commenced the "Messiah."

During the year 1743-4, when Emanuel Swedenborg was in his fifty-sixth year, occurred the great crisis in his soul's history, which changed the eminent practical philosopher into a theologian and a seer. He became at once completely absorbed in his new subject, and spent thirteen years of hard toil at it.

Among the many who died at fifty-five were : Isaac Casaubon, 1614 ; George Whitefield, 1770 ; Sir David Wilkie, 1841 ; Elizabeth Barrett Browning, 1861 ; Mrs. Gaskell, 1865 ; and Charles Kingsley, 1875.



XV

THE CATARACTS OF LIFE.—FROM FIFTY-FIVE TO SIXTY

IN this chapter we complete The Round of the Clock. We began with six o'clock in the morning, and took each hour as representing a lustrum, or five years. Now we have come to the lustrum that ends the round. We reach six o'clock in the evening—sixty years of age. A man's life does not end at sixty. There remain for many not the least happy and peaceful years of their appointed time. Professor Osler humorously suggests that people after that period should be thrown over bridges or chloroformed. Dr. Osler, it may be noted, admits that the influence of women after sixty on their own sex may be most helpful, "particularly if aided by those charming accessories—a cap and a fichu."

Over and over again I have pointed out that no special characterisation will fit the particular lustrums with any approach to exactness. We have dealt only in generalities. The years between fifty and sixty are often the years of great prosperity and power. They are often also the years of calamity. I have given illustrations of the brighter side, and now I turn to the latter. It does seem as if it were between fifty and sixty that many strong hearts cracked, as if between those years the cataracts of life are often reached and the soul awakened to the full experience and intelligence of tragedy.

I

Of this a chief example is to be found in Sir Walter Scott. His Journal, first published in its completeness by Mr. David Douglas in 1890, is one of the most memorable records of struggle in the whole range of literature. The undisputed facts that brought about Scott's downfall may be stated in a few words. He became associated in business with Ballantyne & Constable, and in the end they were all ruined in 1826. Scott's liability amounted to £130,000. His associates were discharged of their indebtedness for payments of 10 per cent. of their debt. Scott, if he had chosen, might have made a similar arrangement with his creditors, but he would not. He wrote in his Journal: "If they [his creditors] permit me, I

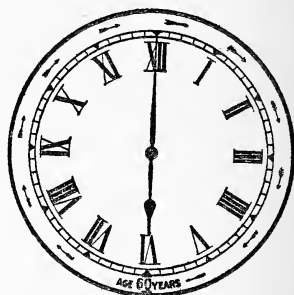
will be their vassal for life, and dig in the mine of my imagination to find diamonds (or what will sell for such) to make good my engagement not to enrich myself." Again he wrote: "I will never relax my labour in these affairs either for fear of pain or love of life. I will die a free man if hard working will do it." Towards the end he said to his physician: "I could never have slept straight in my coffin till I had satisfied every claim against me." The cost at which this was done by a man who had reached fifty-five years is told in a way which shows the grandeur of a hero's make and character.

The collapse came on January 16, 1826. In the same spring there followed the illness and death of his wife, and he writes: "I am as alert in thinking and deciding as I ever was in my life. Yet, when I contrast what this place now is with what it has been not long since, I think my heart will break. Lonely, aged, deprived of my family—all but poor Anne—an impoverished and embarrassed man, I am deprived of the sharer of my thoughts and counsels, who could always talk down my sense of the calamitous apprehensions which break the heart which must bear them alone." But he yoked his great imagination to constant labour. After he had toiled all day at the drudgery of his "Life of Napoleon," he lay at night dreaming about his lost wife, "and it was only when I was fully awake that I could persuade myself that she was dark,

low and distant, that my bed was widowed." He came to grudge every minute that he did not spend at his desk. A feeling of bodily helplessness from week to week crept over him. His handwriting became more and more cramped and confused, but he grappled manfully with his sufferings, throwing the whole force of his indomitable nature into the effort to do his best. During this period he wrote, among many other things, "Woodstock," "The Fair Maid of Perth," and "Anne of Geierstein."

On September 24, 1827, he notes: "Something of the black dog still hanging about me; but I will shake him off. I generally affect good spirits in company of my family, whether I am enjoying them or not. It is too severe to sadden the harmless mirth of others by suffering your own causeless melancholy to be seen, and this species of exercise is like virtue, its own reward, for the good spirits which are at first simulated at length become real."

He goes to see the mother of his lost love, and writes (November 7, 1827): "I went to make another visit, and fairly softened myself, like an old fool, with recalling old stories till I was fit for nothing but shedding tears and repeating verses for the whole night. This is sad work. The very



grave gives up its dead, and time rolls back thirty years to add to my perplexity. I do not care. I begin to grow overhardened, and, like a stag turning at bay, my natural good temper grows fierce and dangerous."

By 1829 he is writing: "I am working hard, and it is what I ought to do and must do. Every hour of laziness cries fie on me, but there is a perplexing sinking of the heart which one cannot always overcome. At such times I have wished myself a clerk, quill-driving at twopence per page." By the end of 1830 he has hopes that the year 1833 may see him in possession of his estate. But 1831 brings the gloomy news that "Count Robert of Paris" is a failure. "The blow is a stunning one, I suppose, for I scarcely feel it. It is singular, but it comes with as little surprise as if I had a remedy ready. Yet God knows I am at sea in the dark and the vessel leaky, I think, into the bargain. I cannot conceive that I should not have tied a knot with my tongue which my death cannot untie. We will see." He compared his labour to the efforts of the Roman coursers driven forth free from the control of any rider, but pricked by spurs which jangled constantly against their sides. But he did not consciously yield an inch of ground. He never pretended that he was not suffering, but he passed through the dark eclipse without bitterness or terror. It has been truly said that the mighty and sober will which struggled on even under the overwhelming

burden of a conscious sense of decay was more impressive in defeat than it had been in victory. Scott was a Christian stoic, and there is as much of Christianity as of stoicism in his high sense of honour, in his magnanimity, in his grave resolve, in his deep resignation. He had to yield at last, but the victory had been won, and won for all time. William Laidlaw, who attended him in his last hours, remembered "that one fine afternoon, when the sun was shining bright into his bedroom, but he was very low, I said, 'Cheer up, Sir Walter; you used to say, "Time and I against any two";' upon which he raised himself on his elbows, pushed back his night-cap, and merely said, 'Vain boast,' fell back on his pillow, and relapsed into silence."

II

It may be doubted whether even Scott passed through such mortal agony and profound gloom as Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865) did, and Lincoln's trial fell in the same period of life. When he died all that was most august in the world paid tribute to his grave, and the best men among his own people felt that the nation had gained in him one more ideal character. It is humiliating to think that certain English journalists during the Civil War applied the epithet "a brutal boor" to the twice-elected representative of the American nation, and to such a man as that representative was. Every

year that has passed since the awful day on which he was assassinated has deepened and confirmed that impression. We see him now in something of his true glory—the upright, self-devoted, unwavering, and unwearied servant of his country. Lincoln was no lover of power. He had a dominating sense of duty, and a real sense of the presence and providence of God. This made him calm in danger, temperate in success, scrupulously and anxiously just and unaffectedly modest. What he passed through can never be fully known. It is clear that he was morbid, abnormal, sensitive, and most heavily burdened by a weight of responsibility. When his deep anxieties were at their height his dearly loved child Willie died suddenly. We read that those who lived with him testified that the President felt the loss of the child with a grief more like a mother's than a father's. Observers say that they never saw a sadder face than that of President Lincoln during the war. "The stamp of a sad end," says one, "was impressed by nature on that rugged, haggard face. But the eyes that were so exceeding sad had also a strange sweetness, and seemed to see more than the outer objects of the world around."

He took up his tasks as they presented themselves to him, and in the execution of his public duty he had to give terrible orders. But he would not make personal enemies. When he refused to triumph over his defeated rival at the last

Presidential election he could say, "I have never willingly planted a thorn in any man's bosom." There is something very high and noble and grave and religious in his published writings. Thus : "I claim not to have controlled events, but confess plainly that events have controlled me. Now, at the end of three years' struggle, the nation's condition is not what either party or any man devised or expected. God alone can claim it. Whither it is tending seems plain. If God now wills the removal of a great wrong, God wills also that we of the North as well as you of the South shall pay fairly for our complicity in that wrong. Impartial history will find therein new causes to attest and revere the justice and goodness of God."

On the afternoon of the day on which the President was shot there was a Cabinet Council, at which he presided with unusual dignity. He explained : "I have had a dream, and I have now had the same dream three times : once on the night preceding Bull Run, once on the night preceding such another," naming a battle also not favourable to the North. His chin sank on his breast again, and he sat reflecting. "Might one ask the nature of this dream, sir?" said the Attorney-General. "Well," replied the President, without lifting his head or changing his attitude, "I am on a great, broad, rolling river—and I am in a boat—and I drift—and I drift! But this is

not business"—suddenly raising his face and looking round the table—"let us proceed to business, gentlemen." He was shot that night.

III

I have many more examples at my hand, but it will suffice to give that of Oliver Cromwell, who died at fifty-nine.

Carlyle says: "The 'three-score and ten years,' the Psalmist's limit, which probably often was in Oliver's thoughts and those of others there, might have been anticipated for him: Ten Years more of Life—which, we may compute, would have given another History to all the Centuries of England. But it was not to be so, it was to be otherwise. Oliver's health, as we might observe, was but uncertain in late times; often indisposed the spring before last. His course of life had not been favourable to health! 'A burden too heavy for man!' as he himself, with a sigh, would sometimes say. Incessant toil; inconceivable labour, of head and heart and hand; toil, peril, and sorrow manifold, continued for near Twenty years now, had done their part: these robust life-energies, it afterwards appeared, had been gradually eaten out. Like a Tower strong to the eye, but with its foundations undermined; which has not long to stand; the fall of which, on any shock, may be sudden."

Among all his throng of cares the Protector found his chief joy in the faithful family gathered round him in his perilous day of greatness. The eldest son, Oliver, had fallen in battle for the cause. Among the rest was his old mother, who died at ninety-four, and a little before her death gave her son her blessing in these words: "The Lord cause His face to shine upon you and comfort you in all these adversities, and enable you to do great things for the glory of your most high God, and be a relief unto His people. My dear son, I leave my heart with thee; good night." "That smiling circle small" was being broken. His favourite daughter was dying under great sufferings and great exercises of spirit, and at last she died. Not long after came the last struggle, when Cromwell spoke much of the Covenants. "Children, live like Christians. I leave you 'the Covenant to feed upon!' Yea, my brave one; even so! The Covenant, and eternal soul of Covenants, remains sure to all the faithful; deeper than the foundations of this world; earlier than they, and more lasting than they!" Again, "All the promises of God are in Him; yea in Him, Amen; to the glory of God by us, by us in Jesus Christ." So the heavy days passed, till, on Monday, August 30, "there roared and howled all day a mighty storm of wind." On the night of that same stormy Monday the dying Oliver was heard praying, "Pardon such as desire to trample upon

the dust of a poor worm, for they are Thy people too." On Thursday night he used "divers holy expressions," implying much inward consolation and peace. On Friday, September 3, 1658, he was speechless, and between three and four in the afternoon he lay dead.

FROM FIFTY-FIVE TO SIXTY

Age 56

DANTE died in 1321 at Ravenna, where he had spent the few tranquil years after his many wanderings.

The year 1801 was the great turning-point in Pestalozzi's career. In this year he published "How Gertrude Educates her Children," and was hailed as the man of the age.

In 1812 Sarah Siddons took a formal farewell of the stage.

John Rennie designed and constructed Waterloo Bridge, which was opened in 1817.

In 1834 Lord Brougham made his famous tour in Scotland, and practically ruined himself as a politician by his eccentricities and excesses.

Julius Cæsar was murdered 44 B.C.; Francis Drake died in 1596; Philip Massinger in 1639; Alexander Pope in 1744; Blackstone in 1780; Beethoven in 1827; Paganini in 1840; Marryat in 1848; and Heinrich Heine on February 17, 1856.

Age 57

Sir Thomas More was beheaded in 1535.

Samuel Pepys retired in good earnest in 1690. His health was still sound enough to enable him to enjoy his leisure and his friends' society to the full.

Handel produced "The Messiah" in 1742.

Swedenborg, in 1745, was endowed "with the gift of conversing with spirits and angels."

Kant published, in 1781, "The Critique of Pure Reason."

Washington, in 1789, was elected first President of the United States, and, "with more anxious and painful sensations than I have words to express, set out for New York."

George Canning, then Prime Minister, died on August 8, 1827, at the Duke of Devonshire's villa at Chiswick, in the same room where Charles James Fox had died 21 years earlier.

In 1845 Sir Robert Peel, then Prime Minister, resolved to repeal the Corn Laws.

Samuel Daniel, the poet, died in 1619; Thomas Middleton, the dramatist, in 1627; Andrew Marvell in 1678; Matthew Prior in 1721; Sir Richard Steele in 1729; Charles James Fox in 1806; and C. H. Spurgeon at Mentone on January 31, 1892.

Age 58

Cervantes completed the first part of "Don Quixote," which was published at Madrid in January 1605.

In April, 1657, Admiral Blake destroyed the Spanish fleet in the Bay of Santa Cruz. He died worn out on board the *George* at the entrance to Plymouth Sound on August 7, 1657.

Milton published his "Paradise Lost" in 1667.

John Locke published, in 1690, his "Essay concerning Human Understanding."

Daniel Defoe published "Robinson Crusoe" in 1719.

George Ticknor published his *magnum opus*, "The History of Spanish Literature," in the latter part of 1849.

David Livingstone met H. M. Stanley in 1871.

Among those who died at this age were: Machiavelli in 1527; Charles V., Emperor of Germany, in 1558; Kepler in 1630; John Donne in 1631; Cardinal Mazarin in 1661; Congreve in 1729; Ann Radcliffe in 1823; William Blackwood in 1834; and Charles Dickens in 1870.

Age 59

Bacon published, in 1620, all that was ever completed of his "Novum Organum." In 1621 he was created Viscount St. Albans, and a few months later was accused of bribery and corruption, and condemned by the House of Lords.

Jonathan Swift published "Gulliver's Travels" in 1726.

Montesquieu published, in 1748, his great work, "De l'Esprit des Lois."

Edmund Burke, in 1788, opened the trial of Warren Hastings by a speech which was perhaps the greatest of his oratorical triumphs.

Among those who died at this age were : Montaigne in 1592 ; Sir Martin Frobisher in 1594 ; Oliver Cromwell in 1658 ; John Galt in 1739 ; the Countess of Blessington in 1849 ; Sir Thomas Noon Talfourd in 1854 ; Lord Macaulay in 1859.

Age 60

Anselm, in 1093, was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury, mightily against his will, but with the unanimous voice of England.

On his death-bed Père Gratry said : "C'est à partir de soixante ans que j'ai eu le plus d'idées." (Since I passed my sixtieth year I have had the most ideas.)

At sixty, says Dr. Weir Mitchell, we come "within range of the rifle-pits."

Isaak Walton published "The Compleat Angler" in 1653.

Goethe wrote his novel, "Die Wahlverwandtschaften" (Elective Affinities).

David Livingstone died in 1873, kneeling by his bedside in the heart of Darkest Africa.

Among others who died at sixty were : William the Conqueror in 1087 ; Wycliffe in 1384 ; Chaucer in 1400 ; Martin Bucer in 1551 ; Paul Veronese in 1588 ; John Bunyan in 1688 ; Bishop Butler in 1752 ; and J. G. Lockhart in 1854.

XVI

THE APPROACH OF AGE

ERE sixty we become conscious that age is approaching. Benjamin Jowett has some wise and heartsome advice for the circumstances. He says :

“ 1. Beware of the coming on of age, for it will not be defied.

“ 2. A man cannot become young by over-exerting himself.

“ 3. A man of sixty should lead a quiet, open-air life.

“ 4. He should collect the young about him, though he will find probably in them an inclination to disregard his opinion, for he belongs to another generation. And ‘old age and youth,’ etc.

“ 5. He should set other men to work.

“ 6. He ought at sixty to have acquired authority, reticence, and freedom from personality.

“ 7. He may truly think of the last years of life as the best, and of every year as better than last, if he knows how to use it.

“ 8. He should surround himself with the pictures, books, subjects in which he takes an interest, and which he desires to remember.”

Jowett, when sixty-one, writes to his friend Morier : " I am very anxious to keep well and live for fifteen years longer, in order to finish my works, on which my mind gets more and more set every year. I shall have made a mess of life if I don't accomplish them. . . . If I am spared a few years longer I shall give myself wholly to Theology and Moral Philosophy, and gather up the fragments, and add to them. If I am not able to do this, I shall consider myself to have failed. You will think all this too ambitious, and so it is. I am aware that I shall most likely be cut off in the midst of it." But age kept creeping upon him. When he was sixty-three he writes : " Age is the chief cause of my despondency. . . . *Ætatis* sixty-three, I feel very old. I must do the utmost for my friends by kindness and correspondence. The great want of life can never be supplied, and I must do without it."

Huxley at sixty (in 1885) was warned by Sir Andrew Clark to lay aside all the burden of his work. Accordingly, early in May, just after his sixtieth birthday, he sent in his formal resignation of the Professorship of Biology and the Inspectorship of Salmon Fisheries, while a few days later he laid his resignation of the Presidency before the Council of the Royal Society.

He writes on May 27 : " I am convinced that, what with my perennial weariness and my deafness, I ought to go, whatever my kind friends may say.

“At sixty-three the Royal Society has dealt very kindly with me. They patted me on the back when I started thirty-seven years ago, and it was a great encouragement. They give me their best, now that my race is run, and it is a great consolation. At the far end of life all one’s work looks so uncommonly small that the good opinion of one’s contemporaries acquires a new value.”

I

Men may not feel old at sixty; they may emphatically decline to be described as old; nevertheless, they have reached the youth of old age. John Foster, writing about this period, says that he supposes the boys are speaking of him as “old Foster,” and this was likely enough. But there is a cheerful as well as a sad view of old age. It is a great thing to have got through so much, to have lived life, and to see rest before one. That lovable man, Dr. Chalmers, had a fancy that the last decade of life should be the sabbatic decade—six decades of work and one of rest. As it happened, he himself was engaged in his fiercest controversies when he was sixty, but though outward rest never came to him, he nevertheless attained a sabbath of the spirit. Perhaps most men feel at sixty that it is time they were gathering up the threads of life, time they were thinking of handing over the main tasks to others, time also to think of a period, long

or short, in which they may be allowed at least to do the work they prefer to do, and not the work they have been forced to do—in which also they may fix for themselves the alternating periods of labour and repose. The situation is very well described by William Barnes, the Dorsetshire poet, who says in his little book on “Labour and Gold” : “A day’s toil should be sweetened by the foretaste of the evening of freedom that looms from behind it ; and the week’s labour should be like a walk through the nave of a cathedral, bright from the light at the end of it.” A man at sixty might describe himself in Barnes’s words, “Vull a man.”

“No, I’m a man, I’m vull a man,
You beät my manhood if you can.
You’ll be a man if you can tēake
All stēates that household life do meäke ;
The love-tossed child a-croddlèn loud,
The buoy a-screamèn wild in play,
The vull-grown youth a-steppèn proud,
The father staïd, the house’s stay.
No : I can boast if others can,
I’m vull a man.”

Anthony Deane wrote to Samuel Pepys : “I have the old soldier’s request, a little space between business and the grave, which is very pleasant on many considerations. As most men towards their latter end grow serious, so do I.”

To this letter Pepys answered characteristically : “I am alive too, I thank God, and serious, I fancy, as you can be, and not less alone. Yet I thank

God, too, I have not with me one of those melancholy misgivings that you seem haunted with. The worse the world uses me, the better I think I am bound to use myself. Nor shall any solicitousness after the felicities of the next world (which yet, I bless God! I am not without care for) ever stifle the satisfactions arising from a just confidence of receiving some time or other, even here, the reparation due to such unaccountable usage as I have sustained in this."

II

Dr. Osler, who teaches the comparative uselessness of man above forty years of age, is still more certain as to the unprofitableness of those who pass sixty.

"In his *Biathanatos*, Donne tells us that by the laws of certain wise states sexagenarii were precipitated from a bridge, and in Rome men of that age were not admitted to the suffrage, and they were called *Depontani*, because the way to the senate was *per pontem*, and they, from age, were not permitted to come thither. In that charming novel, 'The Fixed Period,' Anthony Trollope discusses the practical advantages in modern life of a return to this ancient usage, and the plot hinges upon the admirable scheme of a college into which at sixty men retired for a year of contemplation before a peaceful departure by chloroform. That

incalculable benefits might follow such a scheme is apparent to any one who, like myself, is nearing the limit, and who has made a careful study of the calamities which may befall men during the seventh and eighth decades. Still more when he contemplates the many evils which they perpetuate unconsciously, and with impunity. As it can be maintained that all the great advances have come from men under forty, so the history of the world shows that a very large proportion of the evils may be traced to the sexagenarians—nearly all the great mistakes politically and socially, all of the worst poems, most of the bad pictures, a majority of the bad novels, not a few of the bad sermons and speeches. It is not to be denied that occasionally there is a sexagenarian whose mind, as Cicero remarks, stands out of reach of the body's decay. Such a one has learned the secret of Hermippus, that ancient Roman who, feeling that the silver cord was loosening, cut himself clear from all companions of his own age and betook himself to the company of young men, mingling with their games and studies, and so lived to the age of a hundred and fifty-three—*puerorum habitu refocillatus et educatus*. And there is truth in the story, since it is only those who live with the young who maintain a fresh outlook on the new problems of the world. The teacher's life should have three periods—study until twenty-five, investigation until forty, profession until sixty,

at which age I would have him retired on a double allowance. Whether Anthony Trollope's suggestion of a college and chloroform should be carried out or not I have become a little dubious, as my own time is getting so short."

III

The "double allowance" is decidedly preferable to the chloroform. Edward Gibbon did not reach the age of sixty. He was born in April, 1737, and died in January, 1794. To his *magnum opus* he gave the servitude of twenty years. On the publication of the last three volumes he writes: "For my own part, I now feel as if a mountain was removed from my breast. . . . I look back with amazement on the road which I have travelled, but which I should never have entered had I been previously apprised of its length." In a very interesting letter to M. Langer, of the ducal library at Wolfenbüttel, he rejoices at his emancipation. I translate from the French. The original will be found in Mr. Prothero's excellent edition of Gibbon's correspondence:

"The memory of my twenty years' servitude alarmed me, however, and I made up my mind that I would never again launch out on a long-winded enterprise which I should probably never complete. It will be much better, I said to myself, to choose, from all countries and from all ages, portions of history which I shall deal with separ-

ately, according to their nature and my own taste. When these small works (I might call them in English 'Historical Excursions') are numerous enough to fill a volume I shall give it to the public. This gift may be repeated until either the public or I myself are weary; but each volume, complete in itself, will require no sequel; and instead of being confined, like a stage coach, to the high road, I shall wander freely over the field of history, pausing wherever I find pleasant points of view."

Gibbon, at the conclusion of his Autobiography, gives his thoughts on the experience which never arrived for him: "I shall soon enter into the period which, as the most agreeable of his long life, was selected by the judgment and experience of the sage Fontenelle. His choice is approved by the eloquent historian of nature, who fixes our moral happiness to the mature season, in which our passions are supposed to be calmed, our duties fulfilled, ambition satisfied, our fame and fortune established on a solid basis. In private conversation that great and amiable man added the weight of his own experience; and this autumnal felicity might be exemplified in the lives of Voltaire, Hume, and many other men of letters. I am far more inclined to embrace than to dispute this comfortable doctrine. I will not suppose any premature decay of the mind or body; but I must reluctantly observe that two causes, the abbrevia-

tion of time and the failure of hope, will always tinge with a browner shade the evening of life."

On this I may note that Voltaire once talked to Frederick the Great after his usual manner, of being old and worn out, and tottering on the brink of the grave. "Why, you are only sixty-two," said Frederick, "and your soul is full of the fire which animates and sustains the body. You will bury me, and half the present generation. You will have the delight of making a spiteful couplet on my tomb."

Voltaire was eighty-three when he died.

David Hume, in the sixty-fifth year of his age, began, as he writes, to see "many symptoms of my literary reputation breaking out *at last* with additional lustre, though I know that I can have but few years to enjoy it." His reputation was established long before that, though his ambition made him minimise it.

IV

It is perhaps true that hard-working literary men are not as a rule long-lived. One of the most laborious of the Victorian men of letters was Tom Taylor, editor of *Punch*. When he died, in 1880, Mr. F. Wedmore wrote: "Mr. Tom Taylor has died at a period of life which the man of literature is hardly ever permitted to overpass. Even the robustness of an exceptional temperament, and one

upon which the strain of work told seemingly but little, did not carry him beyond the time which, to the lawyer, the country squire, the merchant, or the politician, is but the beginning of active old age. He was sixty-two or sixty-three. Some compensation for a premature death may perhaps be seen in the fact that Mr. Taylor died in the strenuous pursuit of the business which was his pleasure."

When Thomas Aird, the Scottish poet, retired from the editorship of the *Dumfries Herald*, at the age of sixty-one, a dinner was given in his honour, at which he said: "Well, if I were a judge, I should never resign; if I were a physician, I should never resign; if I were a minister of the Gospel, I should never resign. And fifty other spheres of active duty there are which can be not only well served, but best served, by the ripeness of years and judgment. But, gentlemen, the Press is scarcely one of these. It demands ceaseless vigilance, ceaseless enterprise, ceaseless animation, and these in many cases by night as well as by day. . . . When I tell you, for myself, I have been on the *Herald* for twenty-eight years, and during all that time, through good health and bad health, have written more or less in every newspaper, and have borne alone the necessary anxiety of every recurring week, you will scarcely wonder that I am now needing my day of rest, and I beg it respectfully from you."

V

Whatever may happen, we cannot quite forget that, after sixty, we are under sentence of capital punishment with a short reprieve. The horizons must narrow, the physical life must shrink and dwindle. But surely the wiser part is that of Jowett, to go on meditating great tasks and pursuing them, in so far as we may, even though we are not destined to fulfil them.

There is something noble as well as pathetic in Jowett's desire that he and his friends should make the most of life. He wrote to Dean Stanley, under date July 14, 1880, urging him to plan out a course of study and writing as the one thing needful: "It always seems to me that the last ten years of life are the most important of all (and for myself I build my hopes entirely on what I can do in them). I sometimes fear that you are allowing yourself to be crushed by personal misfortunes—some very real, like the loss of dear Lady Augusta, which I shall never cease to lament, but others partly fanciful, like this matter of the Prince Imperial, which does not affect you in any important manner. Will you not shake them off, and fix your mind exclusively on higher things? I really believe that this 'expulsive power' is necessary for your happiness. I am certain that your talents are as good as ever, and your experience far greater. . . . Will you not reflect upon the whole matter?

Forty years ago we all expected you to be the most distinguished man amongst us, and you must not disappoint us."

It was good advice, though Dean Stanley died just a year after, and though Jowett himself was able to add very little to his own permanent work.

XVII

ZENITHS

MR. HAMILTON FYFE, in the *Daily Mail* of June 11, 1910, gives an interview with Mr. Roosevelt on the eve of his departure from England.

He says: "Among the many virtues for which he has won the admiration of the world (an admiration expressed in a unique measure, and by no means without precedent during his wonderful progress through Europe), modesty is not usually reckoned. Yet he is a truly modest man. He has noticed that in all careers there is a wavelike tendency to gather, to reach a certain height, and then to break. He thinks it quite possible that he has reached the crest of the wave. He would be quite content to live his life quietly, happy in his home and in his friends, with a thousand interests to keep his mind active and his sympathies keen. No man was ever less dependent upon the excitement or the rewards of public life. He could do without them perfectly well."

I

There are zeniths in the humblest life, and they are to be distinguished. There is the zenith of

happiness, there is the zenith of efficiency, and there is the zenith of success. These do not coincide by any means. In all probability the zenith of happiness comes first. It is to be found in the earlier years. Often it slips past very partially recognised. But when the years have done their best and their worst with us, and we look back on the long way, we see things, and know them even as they truly were.

The zenith of efficiency must vary with the difference in individuals and the difference in professions, but as a rule it comes a long while before the zenith of success. The late Dr. Dale held that the zenith of a preacher's efficiency should be between the age of fifty-five and that of sixty-five. I should put it between forty and forty-five. Recently I asked an eminent authority on education about the zenith of a teacher's efficiency. This he placed without hesitation at between thirty-five and forty years. There is good authority for the view that a medical man is at his best from forty-five to fifty. However this may be, it frequently happens that the age when the teacher is most effective, when the preacher is most eloquent, when the physician is surest and keenest, comes at a time when their powers have received no proper recognition. To beat down difficulties, hindrances, prejudices, one must go on living and labouring. And so I am inclined to put the zenith of success—the time of most consideration

and public honour—as somewhere in the sixties, say from sixty-five to seventy. At that time a man may be in full vigour, and yet be able to look back on a laborious and successful career. He is safe, or comparatively safe, in the position he has climbed to. Criticism dies down, people accept him as an institution. Honours are conferred on him partly because he deserves them, and partly because it is felt that there should be no more postponement. All this is, I think, particularly true of the three great professions. Bishops may be younger than they used to be, but they are not young. Surgeons may shrink from major operations after sixty, but physicians are at their ripest, and the authority of a great specialist between sixty-five and seventy is unchallenged. By this time, or a little before, lawyers are promoted to the Bench.

There have been a good many instances where even those who have climbed to the woolsack have passed away at a comparatively green and tender age. Lord Talbot died in his fifty-third year, Lord Cowper in his sixtieth year, Lord Northington in his sixty-fourth year, Lord Harcourt, Lord Macclesfield, and Lord King when they were no more than sixty-five. But against these we may set Lord Camden, dying at eighty; Lord Bathurst, who built Apsley House at eighty-five; Eldon, who talked racily and drank his two bottles of port at a sitting in his eighty-seventh year; Lyndhurst, who

was a lively and welcome guest at dinner-parties when he had passed ninety; and Brougham, who attained the same age. Lord St. Leonards was another who lived till past ninety, and Lord Cottenham died in his eighty-first year, and so did Lord Cranworth, and Lord Campbell survived to be seventy-three. Lord St. Leonards could write clear, pithy, pungent English when he was past ninety. These are facts that help to take away the terror of old age, but of most of these distinguished and fortunate men it may be said that their best days were between sixty-five and seventy, or earlier still.

II

When the zenith is reached there must be, sooner or later, decline.

In one of her latest and most poignant stories, Mrs. Oliphant, from her own bitter experience, discourses on the ebb-tide. It is a strange discovery when a man finds himself carried away by the retiring waters. This does not mean necessarily the approach of age or the failure of life. It means the overwhelming revelation which comes to most who live long enough that their successes, whatever they may have been, are over, and that thenceforward they must accustom themselves to the thought of going out with the tide. The discovery may be as sudden as it is strange for the sufferer himself, though other people may have seen what was

coming long before. "The moment when we first perceive that our individual tide has turned is one which few persons will find it possible to forget. We look on with a piteous surprise to see our little triumphs, our not-little hopes, the future we had still believed in, the past in which we thought our name and fame would still be to the good, whatever happened, all floating out to sea, to be lost there, out of the sight of men. In the morning all might seem as sure to go on for ever—that is, for our time, which means the same thing—as the sky over us, or the earth beneath our feet; but before evening there was a different story, and the tide was in full retreat, carrying with it both conviction of the past and hope in the future, not only our little laurels, all tossed and withered, and our little projects, but also the very heart of exertion, our confidence in ourselves and providence. The discovery comes in many different ways—in the unresponsive silence which greets an orator who was once interrupted by perpetual cheers, in the publishing of a book which drops and is never heard of more; or, as in the present case, the unsold pictures: and in the changed accent with which the fickle public pronounces a once-favoured name."

Life is greatly changed to those who have felt the turn of the tide. Mrs. Oliphant asks: "Why did not Napoleon die at Waterloo? He lived to add a pitiful postscript to his existence, to accu-

multate all kinds of squalid miseries about his end, instead of the dramatic and clear-cut conclusion which he might have attained by a merciful bullet or the thrust of a bayonet. And how well it would be to end thus when we have discovered that our day is over ! But so far from that, the man has to go on, as if nothing had happened, 'in a cheerful despair,' as I have read in a notebook—as if to-day were as yesterday, or perhaps more abundant."

The novelist tells us of an artist, Mr. Sandford, in perfect health, who had attained early the height of his profession, and had since attracted a large and very even share of popular approbation. His income was very steady, and his life pleasant and ample and agreeable. His wife had been his true companion and helpmeet. They had two pretty grown-up girls, full of the chatter of society, and likewise full of better things. There were also two grown-up sons, both agreeable and clever, but not earning money. That question indeed was never discussed with the young ones, for Mr. Sandford's revenues were sufficient. There was just a little anxiety because the young men were earning no money, but there was no serious trouble. The artist was painting one day at his Academy pictures, and felt a little anxious about the lads. Shortly afterwards one of his patrons, Lord Okeham, visited the studio, and went away without giving any commission. Next his Academy picture, the principal one of the year, came back unpurchased, without any

explanation at all. Mrs. Sandford said it was a pleasure to see, and that the worst thing of being a painter's wife was that she never cared to have the pictures taken away. Mr. Sandford, however, was slightly disturbed, and the disturbance increased as visitor after visitor came, and nobody bought a picture. By-and-by a picture-dealer arrived in the company of an exceptionally ignorant and outspoken millionaire. The picture-dealer urges him to buy one of Mr. Sandford's finest paintings, and he says at last that he will take the picture, but expect the discount. Mr. Sandford is about to protest against the discount when he catches the picture-dealer's eye. The man makes all kinds of gestures, and at last, in a hoarse whisper, says imperatively, "Take it," in the painter's ear. So the picture is sold at a slight reduction indeed, yet sold at a good price. Next the painter suddenly remembers that he has completed a little picture on which he is working, but has no other commission of any kind on hand. It was a little thing, but it gave him a tragic shot. It seemed to mean the sudden and sharp arrest of everything. But Mr. Sandford reflected that there were ups and downs in every painter's life, and his pain was stilled for a while. The picture-dealer, however, showed him several pictures of his own which remained unsold. "I thought," said the dealer, "they were as safe as the bank. I bought them on spec., thinking I'd get a customer as soon as they were in the shop—and, if you'll believe me,

nobody'll have them. I can't tell what people are thinking of, but that's the truth." Mr. Sandford is heart-stricken. An artist at his age could have no fresh start. He remembered, with a forlorn self-reproach, of having himself said that So-and-so should retire ; that it would be more dignified to give up work before work gave him up. It was such an easy thing to say, and so cruel, for he had no money. He and his wife had spent their income, and all they had done was to make an insurance of a thousand pounds for each of the children. The artist says little, but his courage completely fails him, and the children think he is dull and grumpy. He goes to visit a friend in the North, and, when driving, he is the victim of a terrible accident.

Before he dies his wife comes to him, and he comforts her. "My dearest, I had not a commission—not one. And there are three pictures of mine unsold in Daniells' inner shop. He'll tell you, if you ask him. The last three. That one of the little Queen and her little Maries, that our little Mary sat for, that you liked so much ; you remember ? It's standing in Daniells' room ; three of them. I think I see them against the wall." During his wanderings in those vague regions between consciousness and nothingness he said : "All against the wall—with their faces turned." "Three—all the last ones : the one my wife liked so. In the inner room : Daniells is a good fellow. He spared me the sight of them outside. Three—

that's one of the perfect numbers—that's—I could always see them ; on the road, on the moor, and at the races : then—I wonder—all the way upon the road to heaven? No, no. One of the angels—would come and turn them round. Nothing like that in the presence of God. It would be disrespectful—disrespectful. Turn them round—with their faces——” He paused ; his eyes were closed, an ineffable smile came over his mouth. “He—will see what's best in them.” And so the poor artist dropped back upon his pillows with an air of content indescribable, slept again, and woke no more.

He had thought it best for his family that he should die, and all things happened as he thought they would. The house sold well, his widow had a satisfactory pension, one of his sons took to his profession with zeal, and got on ; another obtained a post through the exertions of an influential friend. The daughters were settled comfortably in life, and so, “after doing his best for his own, and for all who depended on him in his life, he did better still, as he had foreseen, by dying. Daniells sold the three pictures at prices higher than he had dreamed of, for a Sandford was now a thing with a settled value, it being sure that no new flood of them would ever come into the market. And all went well. Perhaps with some of us, too, that dying which it is a terror to look forward to, seeing that it means the destruction of a home, may prove, like the

painter's, a better thing than living even for those who love us best. But it is not to every one that it is given to die at the right moment, as Mr. Sandford had the happiness to do."

III

There is such a thing as declining and rising again. In one of Marion Crawford's novels an artist, who is spending every penny and more of a large income, is warned of the inevitable result. "Oh, well," said he, "misery will be the foundation of my second manner." Many a time brave men have had calumny heaped upon them because of their unflinching stand for a noble cause, and enemies have been forward to predict that they will never be restored to favour. But history is full of strange reversals of human judgment. There are not a few who have reached the zenith of fame after they have died. But Mrs. Oliphant's story is one that is often told. "It seems to me," said Dumas a few days before he died at sixty-seven; "that I have built only upon sand." The old, unconquerable spirit had sunk into dejection and submission. The neglect of contemporaries had blighted it.

Happier by far was Hans Andersen, who died at seventy in 1875, and wrote, towards the end of his completed life: "It is as if I had filled up my wheel of life with fairy-tale spokes quite close together.

If I go into the garden among the roses, what have they (and even the snails upon them) to tell me that they have not told me already? If I look at the broad water-lily leaves, I remember that Thumbelisa has already finished her journey. If I listen to the wind, it has already told me about Valdemar Daae, and has no better story."

XVIII

“A PENSION AND A HOPE”

IN the *Times* for April 22, 1909, there appeared the following enigmatic announcement, which I give in facsimile. It suggests my title. There are some who are happy enough to retire on a pension and a hope :

“The Rev. A. J. Wright, vicar of Lapley, Stafford, is retiring shortly on a pension.
and a hope that the gifts will prove useful.”

I

Recently I spent an evening very happily in the company of two eminent men who have just attained the age of seventy. They are looking, if possible, better than ever, and they were in the highest spirits. “We do not grow old now,” said one of them ; “we grow older.” No infirmity of old age was visible, and yet both men had quietly given over part of the work that has made them famous. A man must bethink himself when he reaches seventy years, for it is the allotted span of human life.

On January 12, 1895, Bishop Westcott wrote in his notebook : " Full term of years completed." On the same day he wrote to his youngest daughter, Mrs. Prior, in the matter of his birthday cake, which she proposed to adorn with a number of candles appropriate to his age : " Ah ! seventy candles ! The only way to deal with them which occurs to me is to abolish the cake, which could not find room for them. The necessity is a parable. It is strange to feel that the working time that comes now is a clear gift over and above the allotted span. In some ways I feel as strong as ever."

Mark Twain wrote, when nearly seventy-one :
* " When I passed the seventieth milestone ten months ago I instantly realised that I had entered a new country and a new atmosphere. To all the public I was become recognisably old, undeniably old ; and from that moment everybody assumed a new attitude to me—a reverent attitude, granted by custom to age—and straightway the stream of generous new privileges began to flow in upon me, and refresh my life. Since then I have lived an ideal existence, and I now believe what Choate said last March, and which at the time I did not credit ; that the best of life begins at seventy ; for then your work is done ; you know that you have done your best, let the quality of the work be what it may ; that you have earned your holiday—a holiday of peace and contentment—and that thenceforth to

the setting of your sun nothing will break it, nothing interrupt it.”

John Kenyon, when much beyond seventy, said to a friend : “Life is so very pleasant that I do not like to think how old I am.” George Grote’s calm estimate of himself when he was seventy is as follows : “My power of doing work is sadly diminished as to quantity, as my physical powers in walking are ; but as to quality (both perspicacity, memory, and suggestive association bringing up new communications), I am sure that my intellect is as good as ever it was.”

II

Old age cannot well bear the pressure of pecuniary anxiety. This is the age of pensions. I am told, by those who should know, that young people and their parents now seek for careers where if the income is modest it is at least secure, and where a provision is made for the time of old age and infirmity. The incomes paid under these conditions are often amazingly small. I know men who have won first-class degrees at universities, and have published important books, who are working away cheerfully at the age of nearly forty on £200 a year, with the prospect of a rise, and the certainty of a pension. The question is whether this craving to be released from anxiety is altogether healthy.

Lord Rosebery spoke lately, with his usual

freshness and suggestiveness, on the education of boys. He was of opinion that "boys should leave school with some definite end in view—some definite occupation to which they betake themselves." He feared that modern Englishmen are, in the mass, an inferior race to Elizabethan Englishmen. On this the *Westminster* made some admirable and weighty comments. Mr. Spender's view was that what is needed by young men nowadays is a touch of the adventurous spirit. He went on: "This, it seems to us, is what needs chiefly to be said to the young Englishmen of the well-to-do classes in these days. The doctrine of efficiency is always being dinned into him, and, if he is of an industrious disposition, he sets laboriously to work to make himself an expert in one or other of the prescribed courses, whether science or history, or ancient or modern literature. Having done that, he has a marketable investment which he desires to lay out in the securest manner, so that he may be sure of an income for life and a pension to follow. His demand is always for security of tenure, even though the income be modest. He comes to consult you about journalism, or the Bar, or a business career, and you have to tell him that all these professions have their uncertainties and vicissitudes, that there are no pensions to follow, and that no one can guarantee his success. So often enough he turns away sorrowfully, and takes service for life in some public employment, which will shelter him against all storms."

I believe these words are profoundly true. It is now not easy to get the best talent for journalism and for literature. The insecurity of the journalistic profession has frightened multitudes of clever men into Whitehall and elsewhere. Undoubtedly the career is too precarious, and if a man finds himself out in the cold at sixty, his chances are very small. What is he to do? I know one able man who has held excellent positions in his time, and has now no steady occupation. Happily for himself, he is an enthusiastic vegetarian, and manages on very little, but I am not sure about the comfort of his family. I believe there is an improvement, and that this may well proceed, for talent in a competitive market must command its price. As to earning a livelihood by the writing of books, no one can do it but the novelist, and perhaps no novelist who does not save money can go on doing it for thirty years or forty years. Still these professions (for those adapted to them) are more remunerative and more full of opportunities than outsiders think. It should be possible for a competent man to lay aside enough to ensure the peace of his old age.

When Lord Rosebery says that modern Englishmen are, in the mass, an inferior race to Elizabethan Englishmen, it is not easy to contradict him. There was about the Elizabethans that grand, saving, adventurous touch which one

comes upon so often in the lives of the early explorers in the volumes of the Hakluyt Society. The complete unconsciousness with which the most terrific sufferings are related, as if they were merely natural phenomena, only worth mentioning in so far as they threw light on the nature of new lands, is singularly impressive. The active manhood and hardiness of virtue developed by the dangers and sufferings of exploration attained heraldic and mystic dimensions. For example, some Englishmen, whose adventures on the coast of Greenland form part of a later volume, though in danger of perishing from want of fuel, would only appropriate such timber from buildings and old vessels belonging to the company by which they had been sent out "as mighte well be spared without damnyfying of the voyage of next yeare," which year they seemed to have extremely little chance of surviving to see. "We got together," says their spokesman, "all the firing that we possibly could make, except we would make spoyle of the shallops and coolers that were there, which might easily have overthrown the next yeare's voyage, to the great hindrance of the worshipfull company whose servants we being, were every way carefull of their profite." And so these poor brave creatures condemned themselves to the scantiest fires and badly cooked food for eight months of a winter, the prospective horrors of which caused them to stand "with eyes of pitie beholding one another."

III

There are assuredly men who are just beginning the best of their lives at seventy. When Palmerston was made Prime Minister, fifty years of official toil lay behind him, and when, after long delay, the cup of triumph was pressed to his lips, it had an exquisite flavour. He wrote to his brother, Sir William Temple, on February 15, 1855 :

“MY DEAR WILLIAM,

“‘ . . . Quod nemo promittere Divum
Auderet volvenda dies en attulit ultro.’

“A month ago, if any man had asked me to say what was one of the most improbable events, I should have said my being Prime Minister. Aberdeen was there; Derby was head of one great party, John Russell of the other; and yet, in about ten days’ time, they all gave way like straws before the wind; and so here am I, writing to you from Downing Street, as First Lord of the Treasury.”

He lived more than ten years after that, died as Premier on October 18, 1865, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

I once thought that most men expected after retirement to do work which their official labour had made impossible, but on inquiry I am inclined to doubt it. A man prominent in the educational world is at present compulsorily retired at the age

of sixty-five. He is well known in literature, but his whole thought is regret at leaving his work. It is no consolation to him that he can write more books : " I have written all the books I want to." Another, in the same circumstances, has but one desire—that he may be allowed, as of old, to take charge of the school library. The dominant mood seems to be a desire for exemption from fresh toil.

In " *Romola* " Bardo says, " What says the Greek ? ' In the morning of life, work ; in the mid-day, give counsel ; in the evening, pray.' It is true, I might be thought to have reached that helpless evening ; but not so, while I have counsel within me which is yet unspoken. For my mind, as I have often said, was shut up as by a dam ; the plenteous waters lay dark and motionless ; but you, my Tito, have opened a duct for them, and they rush forward with a force that surprises myself."

There must be many whose daily business shuts the mind up like a dam, but I suppose by the time of retirement there comes too often a disabling weariness. So it was with Charles Lamb, though he was " superannuated " at fifty. He had Sundays, a day at Easter, and a day at Christmas, and a full week in the summer, but for the rest of the year the rigours of attendance, and he had a perpetual dread of some crisis to which he would be found unequal. (I give his own version of the facts, though it is scarcely accurate.) So when he was set free, it was like a passing out of time

into eternity. He had a quiet home-feeling of the blessedness of his condition when the first giddy raptures had subsided, but he had no thought of further toil. "*Opus operatum est.* I have done all that I came into this world to do. I have worked task-work, and have the rest of the day to myself."

Dean Hook wrote his "Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury" after his retirement, and they occupied him for fifteen years, and at the end he adopted a remark from Dr. Hammond: "It is time for me to be weary while I am yet unwilling to be while my labour may be useful."

It is added: "The latter is the wiser view of life. 'Threescore and ten' may give men a right to plead weariness, but a man is only as old as he feels, and, like Dr. Hammond, if he feels strong, work is heartily welcome."

Theodore Agrippa D'Aubigné, a great soldier in his day, retired in 1610 at the age of sixty to a life of literary study in Geneva. He had still twenty years to live, and during that period he wrote his great and indispensable historical works.

George Macdonald in "Alec Forbes" tells us about the aged schoolmaster, Mr. Cupples, who came to see Alec and Annie every summer, and generally remained over the harvest. "He never married; but he wrote a good book."

In reply to congratulations on attaining his seventy-fifth birthday, Oliver Wendell Holmes

wrote : "Coming to me so late in life, they seem almost like open letters of introduction to a celestial household, to which I am commended by my air-breathing friends and associates. Could I but carry them with me as credentials, it seems as if the angels themselves would make obeisance to a new-comer so highly spoken of. Speak as indulgently as you may to one who has crossed the dead line of the Psalmist's reckoning, he cannot forget that he is sitting amid the ruins of the generation to which he belongs—himself a monument, if not a ruin, on which all but himself can read the inscription. Let not the critic weigh too nicely the value of the praise bestowed upon him. They come to me at one of those periods of life when kind words are most needed and most tenderly welcomed."

The great charm of retirement to not a few is that they will have their time to give to their books. But Prospero, that monarch in retirement, said :

"And deeper than did ever plummet sound
I'll drown my book."

XIX

“ENCOMIUM SENECTUTIS”: IN PRAISE OF OLD AGE

IN the foregoing chapters I have told “The Story of our Lives from Year to Year.” I have followed the round of the clock. But when old age sets in it becomes tedious and difficult, if not impossible, to assign characteristics to the separate lustrums. Nature has traced no hard-and-fast line of years and constitution which mental activity cannot overpass. I content myself, therefore, with some general notes on old age, and in these, as all through, my desire is to set forth the more favourable and hopeful aspect of our chequered years.

The writer on old age finds himself singularly unhelped by literature. With the exception of Cicero’s immortal book, I do not know any formal treatise on the subject which has obtained the least currency. Cicero’s book, noble in parts as it is, can hardly be described as authoritative, for Cicero wrote rather on the needlessness of old age than on its privileges. He put what he had to say into the mouth of Cato the elder at the age of eighty-four. His ground thought is, that we must struggle against

old age as we do against death. But Cicero himself was hardly converted by his own counsel, for though he perished at sixty-three, he had written previously, "Old age makes me more and more bitter."

Two renowned American writers have discoursed well and bravely on the theme—Emerson and Holmes. It was happily remarked that Holmes's book, "The Iron Gate and other Poems," published in 1880, might have been styled, "Encomium Senectutis," for never before were the compensations and advantages of age set forth so comfortingly to the world. Holmes's cheerful theories are most distinctly advanced in "The Iron Gate." To the question whether others have shown him old age asking the aid of Death and sad Ecclesiastes sighing over the loosened cord, the broken bowl, he responds :

"Yes, long indeed, I've known him at a distance,
And now my lifted door-latch shows him here ;
I take his shrivelled hand without resistance,
And find him smiling as his step draws near.

"What though of gilded baubles he bereaves us,
Dear to the heart of youth, to manhood's prime ?
Think of the calm he brings, the wealth he leaves us,
The hoarded spoils, the legacies of time !

"Altars once flaming, still with incense fragrant,
Passion's uneasy nurslings rocked asleep,
Hope's anchor faster, wild desire less vagrant,
Life's flow less noisy, but the stream how deep !

“Still as the silver cord gets worn and slender,
Its lightened task-work tugs with lessening strain.
Hands get more helpful, voices, grown more tender,
Soothe with their softened tones the slumberous brain.

“Youth longs and manhood strives, but age remembers,
Sits by the raked-up ashes of the past,
Spreads its thin hands above the whitening embers
That warm its creeping life-blood till the last.

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“But, O my gentle sisters, O my brothers,
These thick-sown snow-flakes hint of toil’s release,
These feebler pulses bid me leave to others
The tasks once welcome; evening asks for peace.

“Time claims his tribute; silence now is golden;
Let me not vex the too long-suffering lyre;
Though to your love untiring still beholden,
The curfew tells me—cover up the fire.”

From fiction very little consolation is to be found. The novelist and the playwright have not enough use for people who are past thirty. They are regarded as fit to watch over the interests of their juniors, but with no right to value their own concerns. Biography helps us a little, but not so much as might have been expected. The underlying assumption of much fiction and biography is that, after a certain period, all care for one’s own health and one’s own future ought to be abjured. But, for all that, there are advantages of old age, not so obvious perhaps as the disadvantages, but quite as real.

I

We need not linger on the disadvantages. The failure of physical power, the dimness of sight, the dullness of hearing, the warnings that the tabernacle of the soul is falling and must soon be left—these are but too patent. There may be, and there generally are, signs of mental failure. The lamp does not burn with a steadily increasing brightness till its extinction. It wanes, as a rule; and in particular the memory often is impaired. Also the earthly future is short and is shortening. “It is a time,” says one, “of shrinking hopes and growing regrets, of failing powers and increasing compunction.” Is it so? Surely this is not the whole story. The pessimist may become more gloomy, but many are optimists. The past in retrospect holds manifold disenchantments, failures, and even tragedies; and yet the worst may be forgotten and the best held fast. The French centenarian chemist Chevreul said on his hundredth birthday that everything in life tends to optimism, and that he believed the people would soon become more brotherly and peaceful all over the globe. Chevreul had seen, as a child, the horrors of 1793, and he lived to see the horrors of the Commune, which occurred when he was a very old man. No doubt he kept a hopeful and open mind, and allowed himself to be carried on by the current of his time. An instructive contrast has been drawn between

the old age of Carlyle and of Gladstone. Carlyle at eighty-four was very gloomy. He thought he saw around him an ever-increasing levity and superficiality, a new life of distraction, a new dread of rigid, steady, unvarying purpose. He thought that his own preaching had failed to teach his generation, and that his long toil had ended in utter defeat. But Gladstone, up to nearly the same age, was the most effective optimist of his time, yielding himself to ideas of his age, and trusting to their impulse as if they carried with them nothing but good. Even Gladstone's strong spirit was subdued in the end by pain, but only pain could have mastered it. In one thing Carlyle and Gladstone were at one—they habitually ignored all that made against their own convictions.

II

The chief blessing of old age is rest. It is a blessing which many of the aged are unwilling to accept. The last generation was one in which hardly any prominent figure was youthful. In 1887 it was remarked that a great part of the world was almost governed by old men. The German Emperor was ninety, Von Moltke was eighty-six, Prince Bismarck was seventy-one, M. Grévy seventy-six, and Mr. Gladstone seventy-seven. In my closing chapter I shall give instances of men in the nineties and later still in the full

blaze of public life, and still apparently in the possession of their accustomed vigour and usefulness. But for ordinary men to take example by these is a profound mistake. Men of average vigour watching the old age of men of miraculous vigour are apt to be misled. The advice that the old should remain in harness to the last is almost always bad advice. In fact the work of life, as it is called, is the work of only a part of life. We should learn gradually to die to a great many of our former pursuits. Old men are proud, and their pride shows itself chiefly in their persuading themselves that they are more efficient than ever. But it has been well said that the self-sacrifice which in youth is oftenest represented by readiness to surrender pleasure for duty is in age oftenest represented by readiness to surrender what was once a duty but is a duty no longer.

The work should be given up gradually. It should be abandoned piece by piece as the strain continues to increase. People do not get tired of life, but they get very tired of their want of life. They become very weary under a load which to every one but themselves is obviously too heavy. To accept rest and release, to hand over without jealousy and without fretting the heavier labours to young men, to be willing to substitute counsel for control, is the road to a happy old age. When ambition ceases to torment, when men are willing to withdraw themselves from the crowded thorough-

fares of life, the young will rally round them with veneration and with love.

III

Old age should also be full of happy memories and calm thoughts. When the working time is fairly over, there may steal into the thoughts of those who have had little apparent success or triumph a certain wistful, humble envy. They have seen those who began the journey with them climbing higher and higher, while they remained unnoticed and obscure. This mood has never, I think, been so well expressed as by W. W. Story in his lines :

“Yes, ’twas a beautiful day,
The guests were all laughing and gay;
All said they enjoyed and admired.
But oh, I’m so tired,—so tired!
I’m glad that the night’s coming on,
I am glad to get home and be quiet;
I am glad that the long day is done,
With its noise and its laughter and riot.

“For somehow it seemed like a fate,
I was always a moment too late:
The music just stopped when I came,
I saw but the fireworks’ last flame;
The dancing was over, the dancers
Were laughing and going away;
The curtain had dropped, and the footlights
Were all that I saw of the play.

"It was only my luck, I suppose,
And the day was delightful to those
Who were right in their time and their place.
But for me, I did nothing but race
And struggle; and all was in vain.
We cannot have all of us prizes,
And a pleasure that's missed is a pain;
And one balance goes down as one rises.

"And I'm tired—so tired at last,
That I'm glad that the great day is past.
The pleasure I sought for I missed,
And I ask, Did it really exist?
Were they happy who smiled so, and said
'Twas delightful, exciting, enchanting?
I doubt it: but they perhaps had
Just the something I always was wanting."

But the melancholy is not deep, and there is an
underlying consolation.

"I have my cruse of oil,
I have my cake of meal;
I am worn with life's long toil,
The threads are few on the reel.
One by one from the ranks fall out
The mates who joined them with cheer and shout,
When the merry march in the morn begun,
Under the laugh of the rising sun;
One by one they drop to the grave,
Where the pale stars gleam and the grasses wave!
On the surcoat is rent and soil,
The dents are deep on the steel,
Yet I have my cruse of oil,
I have my cake of meal."

Life may have been a poorer thing than we hoped
it would be, but it has brought us beyond our

hoping, and we do not grieve because the road of our pilgrimage has been “somewhat narrow, somewhat slow.” Indeed, life has failed to work its best results, if old age does not keep what is most precious in youth :

“You keep your youth as yon Scotch firs,
Whose gaunt line my horizon hems,
Though twilight all the lowland blurs,
Hold sunset in their ruddy stems.”

“Age does something in taking away energy—and energy, if rightly directed, is enviable. It weakens the tenacity of memory—and memory, if it can only manage to drop what is not worth keeping, is also enviable ; and it diminishes the vivacity and spring of the imagination. But in a noble mind it takes away prejudice and passion and irritable self-consciousness. It takes away more that misleads and perverts the judgment and the imagination than it takes away of judging and imagining power. It does an immense clarifying and purifying work, a work which tends more to the true appreciation of the relative places of human beings in the universe than in any other agency in life. It may even attain, as Milton says, ‘to something of prophetic strain.’ Age may drain away all the generous passion and leave nothing but envy, vindictiveness, and wilfulness. Age is a sieve which strains away either the dregs, and leaves behind all that is finest, or strains away the

finer elements of experience, and leaves only the dregs. Yet the veneration for age is founded wholly on the assumption that the finer elements of experience are retained in the mind, and the grosser ones purged away."

IV

Age brings us to rest, and to more than rest. The aged, like Charles Lamb's bookseller, are "setting bedwards," and that is not the whole story. They may hear the "Song of the Aerial Spirits":*

"Poor mortals, that are clogged with earth below,
Sink under love and care,
While we, that dwell in air,
Such heavy passions never know.
Why, then, should mortals be
Unwilling to be free
From blood, that sullen cloud,
Which shining souls does shroud?
Then they'll show bright,
And like us light,
When, leaving bodies with their care,
They slide to us and air."

As Mr. Andrew Lang has said: "It is reunion after this life that we really want; the rest is nothing."

"O thou soul of my soul, I shall clasp thee again,
And with God be the rest."

In Mrs. Humphry Ward's "Marcella," Mrs.

* Dryden.

Jellison says: “‘It wor she taught *me*. . . . She had a queer way wi’ the hard words, I can tell yer, miss. When she couldn’t tell ’em herself she’d never own up to it. “Say ‘Jerusalem,’ my dear, and pass on.” . . . An’ when Isabella an’ me used to read the Bible nights, I’d allus rayther do’t than be beholden to me own darter. It gets yer through, anyway.’”

The author of “John Inglesant,” writing of his friend Bishop Bowlby, of Coventry, says: “In these last testing moments, when the superficial intellect no longer keeps rigid guard over the secrets of the soul, his mind wandering, as we say, not knowing where such a wandering may happily lead, the bright August sun shining into his room with the old familiar human warmth, he said, ‘It is a pleasant day to go up to Jerusalem this Easter-time.’ So his pure and knightly soul passed from us into the great darkness like to some stainless Galahad of old, to whom the dim and shadowy forest field of strange voices and forms of dread open suddenly in a blaze of glory upon the great vision of the City of God.”

XX

NONAGENARIANS AND CENTENARIANS

It is impossible to question Bismarck's saying :
" Undoubtedly the first seventy years are the most important part of life." There have been those long past seventy who have done great things, but after seventy the steps, however feeble and halting, are steps that devour the way.

I

When Oliver Wendell Holmes had attained the age of eighty he wrote his last paper on old age. He quoted from the Bible the valiant words of Caleb, the son of Jephunneh : " This ancient warrior speaks of himself in these brave terms : ' Lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old. As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me : as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out and to come in.' " But not all octogenarians were like him. Hear the piping of old Barzillai : " I am

this day fourscore years old ; and can I discern between good and evil ? Can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink ? Can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women ? Wherefore, then, should thy servant be yet a burden unto my lord the king ?” Among the nonagenarians mentioned by Holmes were Lord Lyndhurst, Josiah Quincy, and Sydney Bartlett, who were remarkable for retaining their faculties in their extreme age. Ranke, the great German historian, died at the age of ninety-one. Dr. Holmes, writing in 1889, traces the history of his fellow graduates at Harvard sixty years before. There were fifty-nine, and ten were living. As they were on an average about twenty years old at their graduation, these must have climbed “the white summit, the Mont Blanc of fourscore.” “In the first ten years after graduation, our third decade, when we were between twenty and thirty years old, we lost three members—about one in twenty ; between the ages of thirty and forty, eight died—one in seven of those the decade began with ; from forty to fifty, only two—or one in twenty-four ; from fifty to sixty, eight—or one in six ; from sixty to seventy, fifteen—or two out of every five ; from seventy to eighty, twelve—or one in two.” The men of superior ability have outlasted the average of their fellows.

Holmes saw more clearly at eighty the effects

of the kindly anodyne of Nature telling more and more with every year. "Our old doctors used to give an opiate which they called 'the black drop.' It was stronger than laudanum, and, in fact, a dangerously powerful narcotic. Something like this is that potent drug in Nature's pharmacopœia, which she reserves for the time of need—the later stages of life. She commonly begins administering it about the time of the 'grand climacteric,' the ninth septennial period, the sixty-third year. More and more freely she gives it, as the years go on, to her grey-haired children, until, if they last long enough, every faculty is benumbed, and they drop off quietly into sleep under its benign influence."

Also he believed that the great privilege of old age was the getting rid of responsibilities. "It is very grand to die in harness, but it is very pleasant to have the tight straps unbuckled and the heavy collar lifted from the neck and shoulders." The original edition of Lord Morley's "Life of Gladstone" gives one volume to Gladstone's first fifty years, and two to the rest. The second volume takes the period from 1859 to 1880, and the third from 1880 to 1898. Gladstone said: "The best and happiest period of my life dates from my sixtieth birthday"; and he also said: "Had I died at threescore years and ten, fully half my life-work would have remained undone." He was seventy-seven when, in 1886, he introduced the Irish Home

Rule Bill; he was eighty-five when, in 1894, he resigned office. At that time he said: "For my own part, *suave mari magno* steals upon me; or, at any rate, an inexpressible sense of relief from an exhausting life of incessant contention. . . . But I have not yet abandoned the hope that I may be permitted to grapple with that considerable armful of work which had been long marked out for my old age." Till the very end there were no great changes in his physical condition, but he suffered at last from acute and continued pain; and when a friend said to him, "Oh, sir, you'll live ten years to come," he answered, "I do trust that God in His mercy will spare me that." He died in 1898, at the age of eighty-nine.

Michelangelo, who was born on March 6, 1475, lived until February 17, 1564. Thomas Hobbes, the philosopher, lived even longer. He was born in 1588, and did not die till 1679. Martin Joseph Routh, the President of Magdalen College, Oxford, was born in 1755, and died in 1854. In his ninety-fourth year he could walk six miles—a fine old man in his wig and gown, choleric and generous to the last. Samuel Rogers, poet and banker, was born in 1763, and died in 1855. Long past his ninetieth year, when he had almost wholly lost his memory, he remembered in a dim faint manner a particular lady whom he had once asked to marry him. Mrs. Somerville, the most remarkable woman of her generation, died at Naples in

November, 1872, at the age of ninety-two, in full possession of her mental faculties. When she had attained her eighty-ninth year she published a book, "Molecular and Microscopic Science : a Summary of the Most Recent Discoveries in Chemistry and Physics." Titian, in 1576, undertook a large picture for the Franciscans. On August 27 of that year he died of the plague, aged ninety-nine. Radetzky, the Austrian general, was nearly ninety when he crushed the Austrian risings in 1848 ; and he passed his ninetieth birthday before he died. The Shakespearian scholar, John Payne Collier, died at ninety-four.

The cynical explanation of longevity is that it is due to the possession of a hard heart and a good digestion. Of Fontenelle, who boasted that he had never laughed, and lived to the utmost limit of mortality, it has been recorded : " Il n'avait jamais pleuré ; il ne s'était jamais mis en colère ; il n'avait jamais couru ; et, comme il ne faisait rien par sentiment, il ne prenait point les impressions des autres. Il n'avait jamais interrompu personne, il écoutait jusqu'au bout sans rien perdre ; il n'était point pressé de parler ; et, si vous l'aviez accusé, il aurait écouté tout le jour sans rien dire." It is better to say that " the most plausible moral and the most consoling which can be drawn from the long lives of famous men is that great intellect is generally found combined with great physical strength."

And yet most of us can verify the remark of Holmes : " How often we see these great red flaring flambeaux of life blown out, as it were, by a puff of wind, and the little, single-wicked night-lamp of being, which some white-faced and attenuated invalid shades with trembling fingers, flickering on while they go out one after another, until its glimmer is all that is left to us of the generation it belonged to ! "

II

Shall we put in for a hundred ? to use Johnson's phrase. Does any one of us really desire to be a centenarian ? Are there any centenarians ? If there are, who are they ?

It is well known that men like Sir George Cornewall Lewis and Mr. W. J. Thoms were extremely sceptical as to the possibility of completing a hundred years, though Thoms had to grant some instances. Their books, however, have been superseded by the authoritative work of Mr. T. E. Young, " On Centenarians," which has been brought up in the last edition to 1905. Mr. Young, who was formerly President of the Institute of Actuaries, has based his conclusions on the authoritative statistics of assurance offices. " In Life Assurance and Annuity transactions the precise establishment of the age and identity of the Assured and Annuitant is an essential factor of the solvency of

these Institutions, and hence is scrupulously and minutely regarded." Mr. Young takes the statistics of the Institute of Actuaries and the Faculty of Actuaries and the completed experience of Government Annuitants, and from them he sifts out the centenarians whose claims are authenticated after the rigorous application of the tests of age and identity. He found only twenty-nine indisputable examples of centenarians, with ages ranging to a hundred and eight. Mr. Young admits two centenarians external to the records of Assurance Companies and the National Debt Office. Thus nearly all the claims of centenarians are void. In the first place, documentary evidence is frequently impossible to procure. In the second place, evidence furnished by other centenarians who possess a personal knowledge of the date of birth of the assumed centenarian, and can presumably testify to the fact, is from the nature of the case usually inadmissible. No witnesses in the absence of documentary proof can be accepted but those who are practically centenarians themselves. In the third place, the age recorded in the certificate of death is not conclusive. Nor are tombstones. Then, even where the proof of age is placed beyond suspicion, the difficult question arises of the supreme necessity of identifying the supposed centenarian with the child recorded in the certificate, or other approved document. This difficulty is enhanced when favourite family names are perpetuated. There

is also the well-known tendency of very aged people to exaggerate, without wilful intention to deceive, the age to which they have attained.

Three typical instances of abnormal longevity which are constantly cited are those of Henry Jenkins, Thomas Parr, and the Countess of Desmond. They are all mythical. The case of Jenkins, who is said to have been born in 1501, and buried on December 8, 1670, rests wholly upon his own assertion that, to the best of his remembrance, he must be 162 or 163. Thomas Parr's reputation for extreme age depends exclusively on his own assertion, and upon the lucubrations of John Taylor, the water poet. No facts or figures are available. The autopsy of Parr, made on November 16, 1635, by the celebrated physician, William Harvey, is constantly referred to as a corroborative testimony to Parr's alleged age. But Mr. Young, who has carefully examined the record, says that Harvey simply testifies, as the result of his post-mortem examination, that Parr appeared to be "an aged individual." Thus he in no way indicates, even approximately, the apparent age of Parr. The Countess of Desmond is reported to have attained the age of a hundred and forty at her death in 1604. But Mr. Thoms has shown that an earlier Countess of that name had been confounded with the lady in question, and that about forty years should, in consequence, be deducted from her reputed age.

Among the very few established centenarians was

Sir Moses Montefiore, who died on July 28, 1885, at the age of a hundred. Sir Moses was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, and a man so large-hearted in his charity that no man ever sought help from him in vain. In extreme old age he was something of a dandy, a miracle of neatness from his snowy *jabot* to the silver buckles on his shoes. Though very careful to eat little, and though he rigidly observed the fasts prescribed by his religion, he rarely drank far short of a bottle of port wine at dinner. Thoroughly conservative in his life and opinions, he would never yield to the modern weakness of having gas and water laid on in his house. Lamps, candles, and a well sunk in the chalk, supplied his wants in his Ramsgate home. He read eagerly to the last, his favourite books being Sturm's "Reflections" and Cicero's "De Senectute." Of the very oldest among them all, Mrs. Elizabeth Hanbury, the mother of Mr. Cornelius Hanbury, who died on October 31, 1901, aged a hundred and eight years and a hundred and forty-four days, it is said that a life of unblemished goodness and practical love and the hereditary placidity of the Quaker temperament, seemed to have formed potent factors in promoting longevity.

But the end comes at last to all.

"William Dewey, Tranter Reuben, Farmer
Lellow late at plough,
Robert's folk, and Tom's and Ned's and
the Squire and Lady Susan,
Lie in Melstock churchyard now."

Or as a Border rhyme has it :

“And when it pleasit God of His might,
They all departed to Heaven’s licht;
To which bring us the Trinity.
Amen, amen. So let it be.”

THE CLOSING YEARS OF LIFE

Age 61

EDMUND BURKE, in 1790, issued his "Reflections on the French Revolution," and before a year had passed eleven editions were called for. Few books have been more directly influential.

The last proof of Grote's great history was returned on December 23, 1855, when the historian was sixty-one, and Mrs. Grote thus describes "the scene: "I remember we had a bowl of punch brewed at Christmas for our little household at History Hut, in celebration of the completion of the *opus magnum*; Grote himself sipping the delicious mixture with great satisfaction, whilst manifesting little emotion outwardly, though I could detect unmistakable signs of inward complacency as I descanted upon 'the happiness of our living to see this day,' and so forth."

Sir Walter Scott died in 1832. He had been calculating according to family precedent, and nearly a year and a half before his death he writes: "God knows I am at sea in the dark, and the vessel, I think, leaky into the bargain—I often wish I could lie down and sleep without waking. But I will fight it out if I can." Lockhart's description of the death scene is well known. "Sir Walter breathed his last in the presence of all his children. It was a beautiful day, so warm that every window was wide open, and so perfectly still that the sound of all others most delicious to his ear, the gentle ripple of the Tweed over its pebbles, was distinctly audible as we knelt around the bed, and his eldest son kissed and closed his eyes."

At this age died Robert Burton, author of "The Anatomy of Melancholy," in 1639; Samuel Rutherford in 1661; Rembrandt in 1669; Garrick in 1779; Archdeacon Paley in 1805; James Ballantyne, the friend of Scott, in 1833; S. T. Coleridge in 1834; Sir John Franklin in 1847; Thierry in 1856; Mary Ann Cross (George Eliot) in 1880.

Age 62

Cicero died in 43 B.C., in his sixty-third year. He had written much about old age and death. "O wretched old man, who in so many long years of life hast not learned that death is a thing to be despised. Death may plainly be disregarded, if it altogether extinguishes life; and is no less to be wished for, if it leads us to a place where the soul will live for ever. There is no third condition possible. What then should I fear if I am about to be either not miserable or else blessed."

J. Sebastian Bach began to go blind at this age from cataract, brought on through excessive application.

In 1832 Baron Cuvier was attacked by partial paralysis of his arm, and knew that the end was near. He said to M. Pasquier, who saw him the day before his death: "I had great things still to do. All was ready in my head. After thirty years of labour and research there remained but to write, and now the hands fail and carry with them the head."

Sir J. W. Lubbock died in 1865. De Morgan writing of him says: "It cannot be affirmed that a man who dies in his sixty-third year has shortened his life by too wide a range of occupation."

J. T. Delane died in 1879. In March, 1877, his intention of retirement was announced to Mr. John Walter, the proprietor of the *Times*, in the pathetically simple words: "Within a few months of sixty I cannot dispute that it is time to rest, and that if I were to complete my fifty-ninth year I should deprive myself of the last autumn I shall probably live to enjoy, for no adequate advantage. . . . I may or may not live a few months, but my real life ends here. All that was worth having of it has been devoted to the paper."

Among others who died at this age were: Demosthenes, 322 B.C. (he took poison to avoid falling into the hands of the Macedonians); the Prophet Mohammed in 632; The Venerable Bede in 735. The notable failure of the second crusade seems to have broken St. Bernard's heart, and he died at Clairvaux in 1153. Martin Luther in 1546; Peter Paul Rubens in 1640; Jean Paul F. Richter in 1825.

Age 63

John Howard, in July, 1789, set out on his last journey. His medical advice was asked in the case of a young lady who was suffering from fever, and in attending her he himself took the disease, which terminated fatally on January 20, 1790. "Give me no monument," he had said, "but lay me quietly in the earth; place a sundial over my grave, and let me be forgotten."

In 1795 Haydn was well stricken in years, and might have rested on his laurels. But so far from this being the case, the two works on which—apart from his symphonies and sonatas—his immortality must mainly rest belong to this last epoch of his life. These were the oratorio "The Creation" and the cantata "The Seasons."

Emerson was sixty-three years old when he read to his son the poem he called "Terminus," beginning :

"It is time to be old,
To take in sail.
The God of bounds,
Who sets to seas a shore,
Came to me in his fatal rounds
And said, 'No more!'"

Dr. Chalmers was sixty-three in the year of the Disruption.

In February, 1868, Disraeli succeeded Lord Derby as Prime Minister.

Skelton describes Disraeli at sixty-three, when he visited Edinburgh. "The potent wizard himself—with his olive complexion and coal-black eyes, and the mighty dome of his forehead (no Christian temple, be sure)—is unlike any living creature one ever met. He was more than cordial. 'I fancied indeed till last night that north of the Border I was not loved, but last night made amends for much. We were so delighted with our reception—Mrs. Disraeli and I—that after we got back we actually danced a jig in our bedroom!' Mrs. Disraeli's age was then eighty-four, according to Sir William Fraser; approaching eighty, according to Froude."

"A. K. H. B." writes in his book, "Twenty-five Years of St. Andrews": "I may note for the consideration of men in my profession, and for caution, how certain is the failure of life

approaching the forty-fifth year. As for the sixty-third, every one knows about the grand climacteric. *Deadly exhaustion* is the regular record after trying duty. Do not think to ignore such warnings, as I did. Very many of us, looking back, if we wrote our own little history, have to read a sad story of truly outrageous overwork, and wonder that we did not die. Our eminent University Member, Sir Lyon Playfair, told me at that time that a very great proportion of brain-working men break down at forty-five. A good many die. Some work on drearily for two or three years, never feeling well or cheerful. Others get quite out of the wood, and have a new lease of life, feeling quite strong and buoyant. After the Member told me this I took special interest for long in watching the course of many hard workers. It was startling to remark how accurately Playfair had stated what must be."

J. A. Froude, who lived till 1894, was sixty-three in 1881, and wrote: "I was shocked to hear of the death of poor Miss B—, that bright young creature with so fair a life opening out before her. How the fruit drops off (the best fruit), ripe or unripe, while we old fellows are left scrambling on! Burton gone—Stanley gone—Carlyle gone—all in this last year. I care not how soon I follow, if I may only live to finish Carlyle's life."

Among others who died at this age were: Melanchthon in 1560; William Drummond in 1649; Fénelon in 1715; and J. L. Motley in 1877.

Age 64

It was in 1614, when he was sixty-four, that John Napier published "*Mirifici Logarithmorum Canonis Descriptio*." This was the triumph of all his labour. It "contained, besides the canon or table, an explanation of the nature of logarithms, and of their use in numeration and in trigonometry."

Leibnitz, in 1710, when sixty-four, published his famous "*Essai de Théodicée*."

Dr. Neubauer writes of his friend, Dr. Alfred Edersheim, who died at sixty-four: "He died quietly and peacefully, in accordance with his life, at the age of sixty-four, which is not more than maturity for learned men. Rest in peace, my friend, and may thy soul be bound in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God!"

Among others who died at this age were : St. Dunstan in 988 ; Edward III. in 1377 ; Murillo in 1682 ; James Barry, painter, in 1806 ; and R. B. Sheridan in 1816.

Age 65

Sir Walter Raleigh was executed in 1618. The following verses were found in his Bible in the Gatehouse at Westminster :

“Even such is time that takes in trust
Our youth, our joys, our all we have,
And pays us but with earth and dust :
Who in the dark and silent grave,
When we have wandered all our ways,
Shuts up the story of our days ;
But from this earth, this grave, this dust,
My God shall raise me up, I trust.”

John Hunter died in 1793. He had gone to the hospital, and said before leaving home that if a discussion which awaited him took an angry turn it would prove his death. A colleague gave him the lie ; the coarse word verified the prophecy, and he expired almost immediately in an adjoining room.

In 1794 Edmund Burke lost his dearly loved son Richard. The blow shattered his life.

At sixty-five Robert Southey married his second wife Caroline Bowles, the poetess, in 1839.

H. A. J. Munro, the first of English classical scholars, died at sixty-five. “England has lost the greatest scholar she has produced since Porson died.”

Writing of Matthew Arnold, who died at sixty-five, the *Athenæum* said : “He is said to have brought on his death by taking a boyish leap over a fence. To die like this, swiftly, at an age when ordinary men have begun to feel themselves passing into ‘the sere, the yellow leaf,’ is surely the happiest fate that can befall a man like Matthew Arnold.”

Among others who died at this age were : Francis Bacon in 1626 ; John Milton died on November 8, 1674, so peacefully that the time of his death was not perceived ; Lord William Cavendish Bentinck in 1839 ; and George Birkbeck in 1841.

Age 66

In 1541 Michelangelo produced his great picture of "The Last Judgment." He had still more than twenty years to live.

William Hogarth, the painter, died in 1764. Hogarth when nearing death was asked what would be the nature of his next design. "The end of all things," he replied. He commenced next day, laboured upon it with unintermitting diligence; and when he had given it the last touch, seized his palette, broke it in pieces, and said, "I have finished." The print was published in March under the title of "Finis," and in October "the curious eyes which saw the manners in the face" were closed in death.

In 1789, when Sir Joshua Reynolds was finishing the portrait of the Marchioness of Hertford, he felt a sudden decay of sight in his left eye. In ten weeks' time this eye was quite blind.

In 1845 John Campbell published the first series of his "Lives of the Lord Chancellors."

Among others who died at sixty-six were: Rousseau in 1778; Zimmermann in 1795; Robert Hall, the famous preacher, in 1831; Sir James Mackintosh in 1832; Thomas Campbell, at Boulogne, in 1844; John Stuart Mill in 1873; Dean Stanley in 1881; W. E. Forster in 1886.

Age 67

Copernicus published his great book in 1540, "*De Orbium Cœlestium Revolutionibus*." It had been finished in 1530.

In 1619 Sarpi's "History of the Council of Trent" was published by one of his friends.

Towards the end of 1868 the seventh Earl of Shaftesbury wrote: "What is my position now? It is like an old tree in a forest—half-submerged by a mighty flood. I remain where I was, while everything is passing beyond me. New ideas, new thoughts, new views, and new feelings are flowing rapidly by. I cannot go along with the stream, but if I survive one of two issues awaits me; either I shall be overwhelmed, and so utterly lost, or the waters in their course will have rushed away and left me alone, stranded and roofless, a venerable proof of consistency, as some would say, but of bigotry in the estimation of others."

Among those who died at sixty-seven were: Leonardo da Vinci in 1519; Cranmer in 1556; Sir Thomas Bodley in 1613; George I. in 1727; George Berkeley in 1753; Adam Smith in 1790; Beaumarchais and George Washington in 1799 (Washington said: "I die hard, but I am not afraid to die"); George Romney in 1802; Sir Charles Bell in 1842; Thomas Chalmers in 1847; Miss Mitford in 1855; Dr. R. S. Candlish, the Scottish divine, in 1873; Anthony Trollope in 1882.

Age 68

Samuel Johnson was sixty-eight when he began to write his "Lives of the Poets," and in his seventy-second year (March, 1781) when he finished. This was his greatest work.

Sir Joshua Reynolds died in 1792. "I have been fortunate in long good health and constant success, and I ought not to complain. I know that all things on earth must have an end, and now I have come to mine."

Among others who died at sixty-eight were: Edward I. in 1307; Thomas Cartwright in 1603; Michael Drayton in 1631; Samuel Butler, the author of "Hudibras," in 1680; Sir Robert Walpole in 1745; Edmund Burke in 1797; Robert Southey in 1843; John Wilson (Christopher North) in 1854.

Age 69

Cervantes died in 1616. Soon after the publication of the second part of "Don Quixote" he began to feel that he was dying, and wrote that remarkable preface to his unpublished remains which concludes thus: "And so farewell to jesting, farewell my merry humours, farewell my gay friends, for I feel that I am dying, and have no desire but soon to see you happy in the other life." On April 2 he entered the Order of Franciscan Friars, whose habit he had worn for some time. On the 18th he received the last rites of the Church, and on Saturday, April 23, 1616, "in full possession of his faculties and in perfect peace," he died.

It was in 1700 when Dryden was on the verge of his seventieth year, as he describes himself in the dedication of his Virgil, that,

"worn out with study and oppressed by fortune," he contracted to supply the bookseller with ten thousand verses at sixpence a line!

In 1789 Gilbert White published his "Natural History of Selborne."

In 1874 Disraeli entered on his second Premiership.

William Blake died in 1827. "I cannot think of death as more than the going out of one room into another," he said in speaking of Flaxman's death.

Among others who died at sixty-nine were : Queen Elizabeth in 1603; James Shirley in 1666; Francis Atterbury in 1732; Alexander Cruden, of the Concordance, in 1770; Henry Dundas in 1811; William Lamb, Viscount Melbourne, in 1848; Sir Henry Bishop in 1855; John Austin in 1859; Bishop Colenso in 1883; Sir Bartle Frere in 1884; and Mrs. Oliphant in 1897.

Age 70

Richard Baxter, in 1685, after enduring much persecution, was sent to prison by Judge Jeffreys.

Fitzgerald writes in his memoir of the Rev. George Crabbe : "To manhood's energy of mind, and great bodily strength, he united the boy's heart; as much a boy at seventy as boys need be at seventeen; as chivalrously hopeful, trustful, ardent, and courageous; as careless of riches, as intolerant of injustice and oppression, as incapable of all that is base, little, or mean."

Erasmus died in 1536 with the words "Lieber Gott" upon his lips.

Von Leibnitz died in 1716. "Let me alone," he said, "I have done ill to none. All must die."

Diderot, who died in 1784, spoke thus of death, "in that long evening of his life": "There is nobody among us who, having worn himself out in toil, has not seen the hour of rest approach with supreme delight. Life for some of us is only one long day of weariness, and death a long slumber, and the coffin a bed of rest, and the earth only a pillow where it is sweet, when all is done, to lay one's head never to raise it again. I confess to you that, when looked at in this way, and after the long crosses that I have had, death is the most agreeable of prospects. I am bent on teaching myself more and more to see it so."

Joseph Priestley died in 1804. He clearly and audibly dictated a few alterations he wished to make in some of his publications. "That is right," he said, "I have now done"; and within an hour he quietly expired.

Among others who died at this age were: Maccius Plantus in 184 B.C.; Francesco Petrarch in 1374; François Rabelais in 1553; Sir Nicholas Bacon in 1579; Sarpi in 1623; Samuel Pepys in 1703, who died in reduced circumstances at Clapham; Daniel Defoe in 1731; Linnæus in 1778; Giuseppi Baretti in 1789; John Wilkes in 1797; Thomas Banks, sculptor, in 1805; Sir Francis Baring in 1810; Francis Baily, Astronomer, in 1844; John Liston, the actor, in 1846; Sir Charles Napier, Lieutenant-General, in 1853; Colin Campbell, Lord Clyde, in 1863; Alexander Dyce in 1869.

Age 71

Johann Gutenberg died in 1468. "Poor, childless, almost friendless, after laying the foundations of an art soon to dominate the world."

Among others who died at the age of seventy-one were: L. Annæus Seneca in A.D. 65; Sir John Mandeville in 1371, of whom it is said, "The love of travel seems to have seized Mandeville again in his old age, and he died at Liège"; John Foxe, after much suffering, in 1587; Thomas Dekker in 1641; Nicholas Poussin, painter, in 1665; John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, in 1722; William Robertson, historian, in 1793; Joseph Black, physician, in 1799; William Cavendish Bentinck, Duke of Portland, who was twice Prime Minister, in 1809; John Flaxman, R.A., sculptor, in 1826; Henry Francis Cary, translator of Dante, in 1844; Daniel O'Connell, "The Liberator," in 1847; Henry Lytton Bulwer, Baron Dalling, in 1872.

Age 72

Among those who died at this age were: Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, in 1555; Johann von Olden Barneveldt in 1619; Samuel Richardson in 1761; Thomas Paine in 1809; William Carey in 1834; John Black (journalist) in 1855.

Age 73

In 1843 William Wordsworth was appointed Poet Laureate.

William Wilberforce died in 1833, "just as the Bill for the total abolition of slavery was passing in Parliament." He "thanked God that he had seen the day in which England was willing to give £20,000,000 sterling for the abolition of slavery."

Among others who died at the age of seventy-three were: Robert Leighton in 1684; Edmund Ludlow in 1693; Ebenezer Erskine in 1754; Gilbert White in 1793; John Foster ("the Essayist") in 1843; Charles Darwin in 1882.

Age 74

Among those who died at the age of seventy-four were: Isaac Watts in 1748; Frederick the Great in 1786; Lady Anne Barnard, the author of "Auld Robin Gray," in 1825; Dugald Stewart in 1828; Jane Porter in 1850; Thomas De Quincey in 1859; Sir Charles Napier, Admiral, in 1860; Sarah Austin in 1867; Edward Fitzgerald in 1883.

Age 75

Among those who died at this age were: St. Boniface, "the Apostle of Germany," killed by heathens in 755; Tintoretto, artist, in 1594; George Chapman in 1634; Thomas Betterton, actor, in 1710; William Wycherley in 1715; William Law in 1761; Dr. Samuel Johnson in 1784; Robert Raikes in 1811; John Horne Tooke in 1812; Sir Sidney Smith in 1840.

Age 76

George Buchanan, in 1582, published his "History of Scotland." He died shortly after.

Lord Broughton, when seventy-six, sent some verses to Thomas Love Peacock beginning:

"This neck, in spite of sundry cricks,
Has lasted me to seventy-six."

To which the aged poet replied :

“ Old friend, whose rhymes so kindly mix
Thoughts grave and gay with seventy-six,
I hope it may to you be given
To do the same at seventy-seven ;
Whence you still living friends may date
A new good wish for seventy-eight ;
And thence again extend the line,
Until it passes seventy-nine ;
And yet again, and yet again,
While health and cheerfulness remain.
Long be they yours, for, blessed with these,
Life's latest years have power to please,
And round them spread the genial glow
Which sunset casts on Alpine snow.”

Lord Broughton lived for seven years after this.

The *Academy* of August 31, 1878, had this paragraph : “ There died on August 22, near Cromer, Mrs. Mortimer, at the age of seventy-six, the author of ‘ The Peep of Day.’ The name of this lady is scarcely known in the world of literature, yet her works have had perhaps a larger circulation than those of any other modern writer.”

Lord Houghton, who was known by everybody who was of consequence in literature, died in 1885. Sir Richard Burton wrote of him : “ During the course of a long, busy, and fruitful life he never said an unkind word, and he never did an unkind deed.” Swinburne said of him that he should have been raised to the peerage as Baron Tattle of Scandal.

Benjamin Jowett died in 1893. He said as he lay dying : “ I bless God for my life.”

Among others who died at seventy-six were : Richard Baxter in 1691 ; Jean François Marmontel in 1799 ; John Bannister, comedian, in 1836 ; J. M. W. Turner, painter, in 1851 ; James Bennett, journalist, in 1872 ; Thomas Binney in 1874 ; and Disraeli in 1881.

Age 77

Among those who died at the age of seventy-seven were : Cecil, Lord Burghley in 1598 ; Jonathan Swift in 1745 ; Haydn in 1809 ; August von Schlegel in 1845. On December 12, 1889,

Browning died at Venice on the day his last volume of poems, "Asolando," was published.

Age 78

Among those who died at the age of seventy-eight were: George Wither, poet, in 1667; Andrew Bell in 1832; Michael Banim in 1874; Ralph Waldo Emerson in 1882.

Age 79

Among those who died at this age were: John Barbour in 1395; Jean Baptiste Massillon, preacher, in 1742; Alain René Le Sage in 1747; Horace Walpole, Earl of Orford, in 1797; George Ticknor and Charles Babbage in 1871.

Age 80

Mrs. Carlyle, in 1826, sent Goethe a lock of her hair, and asked in return "a lock of your hair, which she will keep among her most treasured possessions, and only leave, as a rich legacy, to the worthiest that comes after her." "The incomparable lock of hair," Goethe replied, "when it came to light by itself here, almost alarmed me. The contrast was too striking, for I did not need to touch my skull to become aware that only stubble was left there. The impossibility of making the desired return smote my heart, and forced thoughts upon me which one usually prefers to banish."

Wordsworth died in 1850. His life of eighty years was divided by no very profoundly felt incidents, its changes being almost wholly inward: it falls, like his work, into broad, untroubled, perhaps somewhat monotonous spaces. What it resembles most is the life of one of those early Flemish or Italian painters, who, just because their minds were full of heavenly visions, passed, some of them, the better part of sixty years in quiet, systematic industry.

Among others who died at the age of eighty were: Roger Bacon in 1294; Richard Bentley in 1742; Charles Wesley in 1788; Lindley Murray in 1826; Louis Adolphe Thiers in 1877.

Age 81

Mrs. Barbauld died in March 1825. It was a death without a struggle—a death befitting the author of those most exquisite

lines on life, lines which Wordsworth once said he would rather have written than any lines of his own :

“Life! we’ve been long together,
Through pleasant and through cloudy weather ;
’Tis hard to part when friends are dear ;
Perhaps ’twill cost a sigh, a tear ;
Then steal away, give little warning,
Choose thine own time :
Say not good night, but in some brighter clime
Bid me good morning.”

Among others who died at the age of eighty-one were : Plato in 347 B.C. ; Maximilien de Bethune, Duc de Sully, in 1641 ; Dr. John Wolcott (“ Peter Pindar ”) in 1819 ; King George III., also Benjamin West, in 1820 ; Lord Palmerston in 1865.

Age 82

Among those who died at the age of eighty-two were : Sir Edward Coke in 1634 ; Edmund Waller in 1687 ; Hugh Blair in 1800 ; Goethe in 1832 ; Maria Edgeworth in 1849 ; James Montgomery in 1854.

Age 83

The Duke of Wellington faded peacefully away in his arm-chair at Walmer in 1852. His son wrote : “ I do not remember the word ‘ glory ’ in any of my father’s sayings, despatches, or other writings.”

Victor Hugo died, in 1885, of congestion of the lungs. “ Born almost with the century, he was a writer at fifteen, and at his death he was writing still, so that the record of his career embraces a period of full seventy years. . . . It is a proof of the commanding genius that was his, that in spite of them he held in enchantment the hearts and minds of men for over sixty years. He is, indeed, a literature in himself.”

Among others who died at the age of eighty-three were : Praise-God Barebone in 1679 ; Voltaire in 1778 ; James Watt in 1819 ; Thomas Jefferson in 1826 ; Tennyson in 1892 ; Prince Bismarck in 1898.

Age 84

Landor at eighty-four addressed these lines to Sir Roderick Murchison :

"But sixteen paces from my century,
If years are paces, on the steep descent
I stand, and look behind; what see I there
Through the dim mist? A friend, a friend, I see,
If the most ignorant of mortal men
In every science dare call him so
Whom every science raises above all.
Murchison! thou art he.

Upon the bank
Of Loire thou camest to me, led by Hare,
The witty and warm-hearted, passing thro'
That shady garden whose broad tower ascends
From chamber over chamber; there I dwelt,
The flowers my guests, the birds my pensioners,
Books my companions, and but few beside."

Among those who died at this age were: Sir Isaac Newton in 1727; Edward Young, poet, in 1765; Emanuel Swedenborg in 1772; Benjamin Franklin in 1790; James Northcote, the artist, in 1831; George Bentham in 1884; Anthony Ashley Cooper, seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, in 1885.

Age 85

W. E. Gladstone wrote to Lady Dorothy Nevill: "The year hand on the clock of time is marked 85, and has nearly run its course; I have much cause to be thankful, still more to be prospective."

Thomas Carlyle died in 1881. When nearing his end he said to his doctor: "For me you can do nothing. The only thing you could do you must not do—that is, help one to make an end of this. We must just go on as we are."

Among others who died at the age of eighty-five were: Henry Mackenzie in 1831; Sir Gilbert Blane in 1834; George Cruikshank in 1878.

Age 86

Among those who died at the age of eighty-six were : Colley Cibber, the actor, in 1757 ; Viscount William Carr Beresford, General, in 1854.

Age 87

Among those who died at this age were : Sir Roger L'Estrange in 1704 ; John Wesley in 1791 ; Hannah More in 1833.

Age 88

Landor died in his eighty-ninth year. His first book was published in 1795, his last in 1863. He was twenty-five when Cowper died, and he lived to receive the homage of Mr. Swinburne.

William Jerdan, long editor of the *Literary Gazette*, died at the age of eighty-eight in 1869. He will be remembered in political history as the person who seized Bellingham, the assassin, in the lobby of the old House of Commons.

Among others who died at the age of eighty-eight were : Michelangelo in 1793 ; William Murray, Earl of Mansfield, Chief Justice, in 1793 ; Henry George Bohn in 1884.

Age 89

Adam Black, the Edinburgh publisher, passed peacefully away in 1874 at the great age of eighty-nine. "A strong, sagacious man who, amid personal difficulties and public disappointments, never lost his head or his happiness, and who translated Wordsworth's 'Ode to Duty' into douce, Scottish life and practice."

Among others who died at the age of eighty-nine were : Titian, the painter, in 1576 ; Henry Lord Brougham in 1868.

Age 90

"Of no distemper, of no blast he died,
But fell like autumn fruit that mellowed long ;
Even wondered at, because he dropt no sooner.
Fate seemed to wind him up for fourscore years ;
Yet freshly ran he on ten winters more :
Till, like a clock worn out with eating time,
The wheels of weary life at last stood still."

DRYDEN, *Edipus*, Act IV. sc. 1.

G. F. Angas, the father and founder of South Australia, died at the age of ninety, and saw the result of one generation. When he died South Australia was in a state of great prosperity, and still greater success was unfolding.

Among others who died at this age was Sir Christopher Wren in 1723.

Age 91

Sophocles died in 405 B.C.

Bishop Barrington, of Durham, died at the advanced age of ninety-one in 1826, fond to the last of imparting to others the secret of his longevity; taking his usual exercise, whether walking or riding, till long after his eightieth year, strictly regular as to hours, always leaving off his meals with an appetite, and wooing sleep by the soothing tones of a musical snuff-box placed by his bedside.

Dr. W. Veitch, the author of "Greek Verbs, Irregular and Defective," which gave him a European reputation, died at Edinburgh on July 8, 1885, at the age of ninety-one years. He was fifty-four when he published his great book.

Louis Kossuth died at Turin in March, 1894, at the age of ninety-one.

Age 92

Samuel Rogers, who died in 1855, lived through ninety years of eventful history, and was familiar with the principal actors in an age which in its political, literary, and social aspects is, perhaps, the most significant in our annals. He listened to the last discourse of Sir Joshua Reynolds; was the friend of Adam Smith and of the historian Robertson, and became the host and intimate associate of Byron and Moore, of Campbell and Scott.

Age 97

The wife of Alexander Hamilton, the great American statesman, survived him half a century, dying at the age of ninety-seven, and during all the time she remained attired in the widow's dress of the early times. Hamilton was killed in 1804 in a duel.

Age 108

Through the kindness of my friend, Mr. Percy Bigland, I am permitted to close this volume with a portrait of Mrs. Elizabeth Hanbury, as yet the oldest centenarian whose age has been properly certified. It is from the painting executed by Mr. Bigland when Mrs. Hanbury had passed her century of life. The year before her death witnessed the celebration of the golden wedding of her son Cornelius.



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